

**RAILWAY**  
**LOCOMOTIVE MANAGEMENT,**

IN

**A SERIES OF LETTERS.**

**BY VERITAS VINCIT.**

[REPRINTED FROM THE "RAILWAY RECORD."]

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I do confess it is my nature's plague  
To spy into abuses.

SHAKSPEARE.



PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, AND SOLD BY  
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## PREFACE.

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SOME of the earlier Letters of the following series appeared originally in the *Railway Times*, then under the Editorial management of Mr. JOHN ROBERTSON. When that gentleman retired from the Journal in question, and established the *Railway Record*, the Writer commenced, and has continued, to address the public through the latter medium.

The reprinting, in a more convenient form, of these Letters was not undertaken till the Writer could no longer resist the urgent solicitations of numerous persons connected in various capacities with Railway Locomotive Management. He was the less disposed to refuse this flattering request that at the present time there appears to be more need than at any previous period of a fearless exposure of a most dangerous system.

The Letters have been very slightly altered, save in a few verbal corrections, and the omission of some unimportant details. The Writer preferred that they should go forth in a collected form very much as they appeared originally. Most of them were written under the pressure of other business, and this fact will, he hopes, plead his excuse for many imperfections.

In several of the Letters will be found promises to recur in detail to particular topics, which are subsequently not at all, or but slightly, alluded to. The Writer is happy to say that in very many cases the first hint effected the necessary reform, and spared him

the trouble of going into farther particulars. In other cases, the lapse of time, and the restricted space at command in the crowded columns of a weekly newspaper, interfered with the carrying out of his original intentions.

Of course the Writer does not expect that this republication will be palatable to those parties whose conduct it has been his painful duty during the last five or six years to handle with considerable severity. He cannot help it. His duty to the public and to the true interests of Railway Shareholders is paramount; but he begs to state once again, as he has stated several times in the course of the Letters themselves, that it is with the public conduct, *and the public conduct alone*, of the parties referred to, that he has concerned himself or sought to interest his readers. Private scandal he has carefully avoided, although in the case of some of the individuals who figure in the following pages there would have been no difficulty whatever in finding very ample details.

With the Editor's permission, the Letters will be continued, as opportunity may serve, in the columns of the *Railway Record*—a journal which has from its commencement taken a very warm interest in every thing connected with the efficiency of the Railway system and the safety of the public, and which (as the Writer of these Letters has had many opportunities of knowing) has in matters of LOCOMOTIVE MANAGEMENT proved for years “a terror to evil doers and a praise to them that do well.”

VERITAS VINCIT.

BIRMINGHAM, AUGUST, 1847.



# RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVE MANAGEMENT.

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## LETTER I.

Birmingham, December 26, 1842.

I HAVE many particulars to refer to, which have never come before the public, and by your kind and able assistance, I hope I shall be able to produce some good, not only to the proprietors and many of their depressed servants, but what is of infinite importance, to the public safety. You have already done much; much is still to be effected; so that the extraordinary economy, which seems to be the order of the day among the railways, may not be carried into effect by subjecting the labouring servant to hardships and cruelty.

You stated, immediately after the last general meeting of the Midland Counties' Railway, that however much you admired that every system of economy should be carried into effect, you were afraid it would be carried too far. This prediction has now come to pass on the North Midland Railway, to the fullest extent you could imagine. That the Directors and their locomotive superintendent on that line have used their enginemen and firemen in the most unjustifiable manner, no one will attempt to deny; they are not only putting the property of the Company in danger, but having commenced running trains driven by men not only totally unacquainted with the line, but who have never had sufficient experience in the driving of a locomotive engine, they are thereby putting the lives of the passengers in jeopardy.

I shall first point out the cause of the present difference existing betwixt the enginemen and the Directors, and the locomotive superintendent of the line, and leave the matter to the public to judge for themselves which of the parties is in the wrong. I am no engineman myself, but I am of opinion that it is the duty of some one to bring the matter before the public, and particularly under the notice of General Pasley and the Board of Trade, to whom the Government have intrusted to look over the general management of all the railways in the kingdom, to take care that no set of men shall have it in their power to act in a reckless and inconsiderate manner, that the safety of the public

should be placed in danger. That such a course of management has commenced on the North Midland Railway I shall shortly and clearly prove.

The Directors of the North Midland Railway sometime ago gave the enginemen and firemen to understand (through Mr. Marshall, their locomotive superintendent), that by the end of the year an alteration would take place in their wages; and having learned the nature of the reduction, the men last week sent in a letter to the Directors, stating that they would not submit to any reduction, but that they were perfectly willing to serve the Company to the best of their power at the present rate of wages and number of working days, that is, 7*s.* per day for enginemen, and 4*s.* per day for firemen, running the trains three days, and in the shed one day, overhauling the engines and resting; running in this manner two weeks and piloting one week. This system continued would give these men entire satisfaction; let any person inquire minutely into all the circumstances, and he will find that the men are not unreasonable.

The alterations these men were given to understand by Mr. Marshall are 7*s.* per day for the enginemen, and 3*s.* 9*d.* per day for the firemen, to run the trains every day of the week, except one day for rest, and on that day they are to stop at home and receive no pay; and to do away with the night pilot, and thereby increase the labour of the men.

You will observe the wages of the enginemen are nominally as before, for it appears that even the Directors do not think 7*s.* too much for a steady man to have to run a train 73 miles up and 73 miles down, which makes the man's day's work 146 miles; but this he is to be obliged to do every day in the week, except one day for rest, which he is not to be paid for. On this day's pay, and doing away with the night pilot, hangs the difference betwixt the men and their Directors.

Let us inquire into the policy of retaining the pay of the "rest" day. I shall endeavour to show that it is unjust in point of economy to the interests of the Company, as it is unjust in principle to the enginemen.

If a man runs a train 146 miles per day, exposed to all sorts of weather, out night and day alternately, and all the time his life in danger from unforeseen accidents that are liable to take place under the greatest care, 7*s.* per day are not surely too much; but when the day of rest is taken from him, two days in the fortnight, (and he is obliged to run his turn on the Sundays), it reduces his wages under 6*s.* per day. I maintain that he should not be docked of this rest day's wages, and I also will point out to you clearly, that by paying for the rest day the same as the others the Company would be no losers, but gainers, for on that day the engineman would then have nothing to do but to thoroughly overhaul and examine his engine, and see it repaired by the fitters; but instead of seeing it done himself it must be left to the fitter and the petty-superintendent, or should-be foreman, (but they assume the title of superintendent, and therefore must have it,) and it is just a peradventure if he would condescend to take his hands out of his pocket and examine the engine thoroughly himself, and even although he did, I doubt very much if he would know; but I repeat again, in whose

hands can the repair of the engine be placed to see that the fitter does it properly but the man's who has to risk his life upon it? There can be no fear but he would see that it was put in the most complete state of repair, and perfectly safe for running a train.

It has often been the case—in fact, it is of every day occurrence—that when a fitter has been sent to repair an engine, he has been compelled to apply to an engineman to point out to him what was the matter; and at other times, when the fitter has said he has put the engine in repair, after it has been examined by the engineman it has been found that it was not properly done. It is also an undeniable fact, that among the petty locomotive superintendents, who are as numerous upon the railways as locusts, and are as vain and intelligent as peacocks, nine-tenths of them could not tell what was the matter with an engine unless the engineman informed him. I am of opinion, therefore, that when the engineman is on his rest day he should be required to attend to the repair of his engine, and be paid the same as on other days.

I shall now refer to the night pilot, and you will then be able to judge of the propriety or impropriety of its discontinuance. By a pilot is meant an engine always to be in readiness in case it should be wanted to go out to render assistance, and to shift carriages, waggons, &c., about the station, so that the pilot enginemen cannot be allowed to be absent from the station one minute. The night pilot is often required to assist the mail train out from Derby, and in many instances another engine is required to assist the goods' train out (when it is heavy), which follows the mail train soon after. Then, when the night pilot is discontinued, whom will the duty fall upon? Why, the day pilot engineman, who has been in attendance above fourteen hours, and, perhaps, has been called out and run many miles. These men, after they finish their day's work, go home, not knowing whether they will be called out or not; but with the understanding that if the mail train want assistance they will be called, of course, would retire to rest, and, after the fatigue of the day, they are called upon about two o'clock in the morning in a dozing state, and obliged to go out with the mail train. Again, the goods' train becomes heavy and another engine is required: then this duty falls upon two men who must be even more fatigued than the former; they also have to be called out, and proceed with the goods' train. Thus, there are four men sent out to render assistance (I should rather say to cause mischief, for no one can say that these men are fit persons to be called upon to perform such duty), the first two having been kept running about for fourteen hours, and the latter two having run one hundred and forty-six miles, and, perhaps, on a very stormy and inclement day. Could one advocate such a system, for it is not only one day in a week, but these men are liable to be so called every night during the week, and so on with all the others in their turns? Should sleep overtake the engine pilotman, who takes the lead of the train (and we all know the powerful effect sleep has upon an overworked and fatigued man), the consequences would be of the most serious description, not only in the immense loss of property, but of human life; and this uncalled-for risk for the paltry saving of .42s. per week to an engineman, and 24s. per week to a fireman.

In treating of the reduction of 3*d.* per day upon the firemen, I shall point out to you the most extraordinary and dangerous work they have to perform upon that line. You will be astonished that men can be got to perform it at any price; it is such that no other line has to do to the same extent. When the rails, from the state of weather, are so slippery that the wheels of the engine will not adhere to the rails, the fireman is obliged to go forward and stand upon the buffer bar, and throw sand upon the rails, and it has been known that the fireman has had to perform this most frightful duty for a distance of twenty miles at a time. You and the public may now judge whether strangers, totally unacquainted with the road, are fit and safe persons to drive the trains. Under all these circumstances, I do think 4*s.* per day are quite little enough for the duty of a fireman, for it is a well-known fact that his life has always been in imminent danger, for, in all the fatal breakdowns, the firemen have invariably lost their lives; but it appears that the North Midland Directors are quite callous about property and life, for on Saturday last these Directors paid off all the enginemen, and started with the trains on Sunday morning with the new hands, the efficiency of which will appear. The first train from Leeds was sent out on Sunday morning by a new hand, quite unacquainted with the line of road, and who, it is reported, has had very little experience in the driving of a locomotive engine; and this appears to be the fact, for Mr. Marshall thought proper to accompany him. The first ten miles they lost a quarter of an hour, and they did not run a great many more miles till the engine stopped altogether. Neither the new engineman nor Mr. Marshall could understand what was the matter; but a bystander (whether a wag or not I don't know) called out that a broken valve was the cause. The astonished engineman and his master took it for granted it was so, and used the usual means resorted to in all cases of that nature to supply the defect; but, alas! when they tried the engine it was "no go;" the engine would not stir. In this dilemma all was anxiety and confusion throughout the train. One lady, dreadfully alarmed, called out, "Oh, we shall all be blown to pieces!" At last they tried if the engine would back, which she did; and it was so far lucky that they were not a long way from a station, where there is a turn-table, on which they got the engine turned, and came back to the train, and then proceeded on with the engine-tender first (*there is an express bye-law on railways, that if an engineman proceed with his train-tender first, he shall be fined, it is considered so dangerous*); however, they reached their destination two hours and a quarter behind their time! This delay caused the following expense of special trains, which, of course, will fall upon the North Midland Company, which will be pretty expensive for the first day's trial of cheap driving. By the train being behind time, the Sheffield and Rotherham Company were obliged to send one of their engines on specially with the passengers, and when the Leeds train reached Derby, another special train had to be sent on to Rugby, and at Rugby another to go to London. Now, all the extra expense and alarm to the passengers was caused by a paltry saving of a few shillings of wages to the most important and the most useful set of men that are employed upon the railway, and by putting inexperienced men upon the engine; for if an

engineman of ordinary experience had had the charge of the engine, he would have been able to remedy the defect in about ten minutes, causing no alarm to the passengers, or delay upon the road. What Mr. Marshall can say about the above circumstance I know not (I speak only of him in his public capacity), but it appears very extraordinary to me that Mr. Marshall should be held out to be possessed of such extraordinary and pre-eminent abilities, and such a thorough knowledge of the working and manufacture of a locomotive engine, when this fact appears to show the contrary. The defect referred to was easy to be seen, and the remedy simple, being merely a slip of one of the eccentric shears.

Let us see how the evening train came on with the other new engineman. His standing as an engineman is reported to be somewhat similar to the other, and it would appear his master thought so, for Mr. Scott, a superintendent, proceeded along with him, and they reached their destination just one hour and twenty-five minutes behind time, a gentleman remarking, as he stepped out of the train upon the platform, that the horse coach had better be started again, for it was disgraceful to see the trains driven with so much danger, causing fear and trembling among the passengers, under the excitement that is existing betwixt the Directors and the enginemen, between whom the greatest harmony should prevail.

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## LETTER II.

Birmingham, January 5, 1843.

IN the *Leeds Mercury* of last Saturday, there is a paragraph, in which it is stated that the enginemen on the North Midland Railway had struck work. Now, the contrary is the fact, for the men (as I stated in my last), after they understood that their wages were to be reduced, sent in a remonstrance, stating that if the Directors were determined to carry out what they had been informed they meant to do, they would not comply; but instead of getting a written answer, as they expected, the only one they received was, that on the Saturday following they were all paid off, without any other reason than that the Directors thought proper; and this is what the *Leeds Mercury* calls the "men's strike!"

The *Mercury* alleges that there were a great many supernumeraries as enginemen, who received pay without work, and that the exertions of two or three spirited Directors have done away with them. Now, there never were supernumerary enginemen on that line. My last letter fully explained the employment of the day for which the men are not to be paid. The *Mercury* states also, that these wise Directors took immediate steps to replace the men that had struck (it should be, who were paid off), and he was happy to learn that a sufficient number of skilful and practised men from other lines had been engaged.

I shall endeavour to analyse the characters of a few of them. To

save time, I shall number them; but you must understand that the number does not refer to the order in which they were engaged by the Company.

No. 1. Discharged from the Stanhope Railway for drunkenness, and again shortly after from the North Shields Railway for the same offence.

No. 2. From the north also, discharged for overturning from 30 to 40 waggons over an embankment.

No. 3. A short time ago a stonemason, and never had experience as an engineman.

No. 4. Was discharged from the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, tried for his offence, and fined 5*l.*; got employed on the Leeds and Manchester Railway; was discharged, tried, and fined 10*l.*; both times for the same offence, viz., running the trains on the wrong line. The *Railway Times* of 1840 and 1841 contains a notice of both trials.

No. 5. Discharged from the York and North Midland Railway, because he was incapable of managing his engine, and has since been a bricklayer's labourer.

No. 6. Not long ago a platelayer on the Hull and Selby Railway; got on the York and North Midland Railway as an engineman, and was discharged.

No. 7. A fireman, and never had the charge of an engine before.

No. 8. Discharged from the Leeds and Selby Railway for drunkenness.

These are the "*skilful and practised men from other lines!*" In support of their character let us see how the trains arrived in Leeds:—

Dec. 26. A goods' train 2 hours late; the engine all out of order.

Dec. 27. The train with the Sheffield and Rotherham passengers 1 hour late.

Dec. 30. A passenger train, with Prince George of Cambridge and a number of noblemen, 2 hours late, and they expressed their disapprobation of the delay.

Dec. 31. A passenger train 1 hour 45 minutes late.

The above are only a few of the late trains, for all the trains for the most part were behind time. The arrivals of the trains at Derby are in a rather worse state:—

|             | Ought to have arrived at. | Did arrive at. |                   |
|-------------|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| December 26 | 1h. 30m. . . . .          | 4h. 20m.       | Passenger train.  |
| "           | 11 45 . . . . .           | 12 15          | Ditto.            |
| December 27 | 3 18 . . . . .            | 9 40           | Mail train.       |
| "           | 10 18 . . . . .           | 10 40          | Passenger train.  |
| December 28 | 1 30 . . . . .            | 4 10           | Goods' train.     |
| "           | 12 45 . . . . .           | 1 30           | Passenger train.  |
| "           | 3 15 . . . . .            | 6 0            | Coke train.       |
| December 29 | 1 30 . . . . .            | 6 0            | Goods' train.     |
| "           | 7 30 . . . . .            | 9 50           | Ditto.            |
| "           | 3 15 . . . . .            | 6 45           | Coke train.       |
| December 30 | 3 30 . . . . .            | 3 50           | Goods' train.     |
| "           | 10 45 . . . . .           | 12 15          | Passenger train.* |
| December 31 | 10 18 . . . . .           | 11 40          |                   |

\* This train had to be brought in by the pilot engine.

I should wish the Editor of the *Leeds Mercury* to compare the above with his paragraph, which states that the trains at the above dates were running with their usual punctuality! There was one lucky circumstance which I must not omit to mention, which happened in consequence of the trains being late. On Thursday last, the 4.30 train left Leeds, and the engineman being incompetent, could proceed no further than Norman-ton. He then came back upon the same line to Wodlesford. There are no signals on that part of the road, and the Manchester and Leeds passenger train was expected every minute, for it was more than due. Now, what a fortunate circumstance it was, for had it been near its time the concussion would have been dreadful, for there is a sharp curve on that part of the road, so that the obstacle could not have been seen by the engineman until he was close upon it, and at full speed. The bad management of one driver nearly caused the destruction of human life, which was prevented only by the bad management of another; and I suppose the Editor of the *Mercury* means by the above circumstance that not the least interruption has taken place. On Thursday one of the goods' guards was immediately discharged because he refused to stand upon the foot-plate and instruct the "new and experienced" engineman how he was to proceed upon the road. The guard had more regard for his life than his situation. If these men are so very experienced as the Directors would have them reported to be, why all the above delays, and requesting old and experienced guards, firemen, &c. &c., to go along with them?

I am of opinion that I have advanced quite sufficient to refute the *Leeds Mercury*; and I also beg leave to inform you that no improvement has taken place this week.

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### LETTER III.

Birmingham, January 9, 1843.

In my last I gave a list of eight of the new enginemen on the North Midland Railway; I shall now notice two others. One of them is certainly an old engineman, and has been discharged from every line he has worked upon; and the last employment, I think, he had, was on the Leeds and Manchester Railway. He was taken off his engine in a beastly state of intoxication, and conveyed before the magistrates, and committed to Wakefield gaol for two months. The other was discharged from the Midland Counties' Railway without a character. So much for the excellent character of ten of them; and if they give so much satisfaction to their employers, it must only be for the destruction of their property and the delays of the trains. To prove this, let us see what occurred on each day last week. I will not give all the trains, because it would occupy too much of your valuable space; one or two for each day will suffice:—

Jan. 2. No. 48 engine, with a truck attached to it, sent out to bring in a broken horse-box. Previous to starting, the *new and experienced*

*engineman* adjusted the connecting rods, and made them over-tight; and when the engine was working, the connecting rod broke, and that broke the cylinder cover, and otherwise seriously damaged the working gear.

Jan. 3. Before the goods' train out of Leeds, at 8 P.M., arrived at Masbro', a distance of 32 miles, the driver was compelled to draw his fire out, and afterwards arrived at Derby 6 hours late; (this *engineman* only worked a stationary engine before). The 8 o'clock, into Derby, overtook a coal train about 3 miles from Derby, with four engines attached to it, the gate-keeper informing the alarmed and trembling passengers that it was only a coal train that had obstructed the line for five hours. The cause of employing so many engines was, that three of them were sent out as pilots, one after the other, but, unfortunately, got so disabled themselves, that they were unable to render the necessary assistance.

Jan. 4. No. 61 engine, running the coke train, broke down in Killamarsh cutting, the *engineman* a fireman from the Leicester and Swannington Railway. No. 44 engine, just having undergone a thorough repair, broke one of the cylinders, and was otherwise much damaged. No. 6 engine, running the mail train, broke the connecting rod, by being too tightly keyed up by the *new and experienced engineman!*

Jan. 5. No 11 engine, running the mail train out of Derby, broke down after running 8 miles. The *engineman* neglecting, or being incompetent, to examine his engine before starting, the set pins belonging to the small end of the connecting rod were too slack; the consequence was, that the key fell out, and caused very great damage to the engine; so much so, that with all the energy possible, it cannot be put in a proper state of repair for months. This caused a delay to the mail of 2 hours and 12 minutes into Leeds; and I am not certain but one of the General Post-office officers was with this train. The *engineman* who caused this was a fireman on the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway. No. 9 engine, damaged very much in the fire-box. The 10.15 train into Derby broke down, and was unable to proceed until the 11.15 train into Derby came, and brought both trains into Derby at 11.45, the first train 1 hour 30 minutes late, and the other 30 minutes late. The extent of the damage to the first engine which caused the delay I have not yet learned; but it must be serious, for the engine was unable to come along with the trains.

Jan. 6. The 3.15 train out of Derby broke down, and was taken into Leeds, by the pilot engine, 1 hour 50 minutes late.

Jan. 7. The 6 P. M. from Derby arrived at Leeds 1 hour late.

Jan. 8. The mail train from Derby arrived at Leeds 37 minutes late. The mail train from Leeds arrived at Derby 1 hour late.

Will the Editor of the *Leeds Mercury* allow the circumstances of Jan. 3 and 5 to be obstructions on the line?

I cannot but mention a most disgraceful proceeding which took place during the week, which caused the greatest terror to a whole train of passengers. One of the new *enginemen* had occasion to return to Leeds with the engine, and there is an express order that no engine shall follow a



train close behind; but this reckless driver (Moon is his name), against express orders, and regardless of all the signals given him, proceeded immediately after the train, overtook it, and pushed it before him just as he thought proper. If the train-engine had broken down, what loss of human life might not his imprudence have caused! I maintain, that if such men are allowed to continue to run upon the line in the manner they have run for the last fourteen days, something of a fatal nature must certainly occur, for you will observe, ever since the change down to yesterday, there have been uncalled-for delays or break-downs every day, and, in many instances, several times in one day. I hold that if one human life be lost under such management, the responsibility that would fall upon the Locomotive Superintendent and the Directors will be great.

I cannot conceive what the Directors must think of such exposures of their new management; at all events, they cannot hold out that they have reaped benefit by the change, for even although they do not return to their former experienced hands, it will take years to make up their loss. The destruction of their property is incalculable; they have got their repairing shed blocked up with broken engines. Under their old hands two fitters in that shed were quite sufficient to keep their engines in thorough repair, and the men did not then work full time; they have been obliged to remove the fitters from the fitting-up shop to repair, and to work over-time. The extra wages to the fitters will more than over-balance the paltry saving they are endeavouring to effect, independent of the loss upon the engines, and the heavy deficiency in the traffic. I would fain hope that they will now see their error and retrace their steps, and recal their former enginemen.

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#### LETTER IV.

Birmingham, February 7, 1843.

It is now four weeks since you published my last letter. I then certainly did hope that prudence, ere this time, would have induced the North Midland Directors to retrace their ill-advised steps, and that they would have been regaining the public confidence, which is so essential to the well being of a railway; but in this I have been disappointed. I am perfectly aware that you have little space to spare, to notice weekly in detail the continued delays of the trains upon that line, to the great and imminent risk of life; but you must also be aware that it is but justice to the public that you should put upon record in your highly-prized journal the results of the foolishness that still enwraps these Directors. That they have brought upon themselves a host of difficulties from which it will puzzle them to get out, no one can deny.

To save space, I shall be very brief in noticing the delays. All I am desirous of is, that a perpetual reference may be had, to keep in remembrance how long this ill-advised scheme may continue. During the last four weeks the delays amount to 3,468 minutes, and as the fatal accident was occasioned by the delay of 12 minutes, it forms just a simple

question of the rule of three, that if 12 minutes' delay caused a fatal collision, how many such collisions were liable to take place in 3,468 minutes? The solution is 289! The number of late trains during the above time were 24 passengers' and 18 goods' trains. There are 2 enginemen, 2 guards, and, taking an average of 20 passengers per each train, which is a very low average, the number of persons conveyed would be 552. The goods' trains carry 2 enginemen and 1 brakesman, which makes those convey 54 persons, making a total of 606 persons who were carried under the imminent risk of being shattered to atoms. It would be wasting time to comment upon this statement; it speaks sufficiently of itself.

When the admirable circular of the Board of Trade was issued, I anticipated, along with almost every one, that good feeling and amity would have reigned upon all railways betwixt superintendents and enginemen, which is so much to be wished for by the railway public; but the contrary seems to be the fact, for at this present moment the greatest dissatisfaction exists betwixt the officials and the enginemen upon the Grand Junction Railway and the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway. But whether the cause of the dissatisfaction emanates from the Directors I am not at present able to state, for you must be aware it is no easy matter to learn correctly what passes on these occasions; but if the dissatisfaction continue, I shall not fail to put you and the public in full possession of all the facts. Whether the Directors are to be justified or blamed, and, on the other hand, whether the men are getting overbearing and unreasonable, and ought to be condemned, you and the public may rest assured I will not attempt to advocate the cause of either party upon unjust grounds.

The above and other alarming statements, which have from time to time appeared, suggest to me that the Board of Trade should be possessed of more imperative powers of interference than they seem to have, and that no time should be lost on the part of the Government to invest them with those powers. The nature and extent of these, I humbly submit, should be,—1st, that General Pasley should appoint a person under him, to be almost continually travelling on the railways; that such party should have a commission from the Board of Trade, and that when he presents his commission at any station, he should be provided with a free ticket to any other station on that line. The duties of this officer would be in the outset to visit all the locomotive establishments in the kingdom, obtain a list of all the enginemen on each establishment, making such inquiries as circumstances might suggest, to commence with enginemen, superintendents, and superiors; entering all particulars in a diary, and upon his return, give up the diary to General Pasley for his perusal; to ledgerize the same (if I may use the expression), and having done so, proceed in another direction, and so on until all were visited. His second and succeeding visits would then commence, and would be of more importance than the first. He would then make inquiries if any engineman had been discharged, and for what cause; inquire if any new men had been appointed; look into the default book, and the arrival of the trains' diary; enter all particulars into his diary; and, upon his return, ledgerize again; and thus

would be obtained a very complete and ready reference for the Board of Trade, regarding all railways, characters of all enginemen, &c. ; and on no account should any one be allowed to write for this officer, at home or abroad, so that he alone would be responsible for the correctness of his statements. Thus, General Pasley could, if he thought proper, make a periodical return drawn up from a very authentic source, which would satisfy the public that the railways were working in an efficient manner.

It appears to me that an alteration must take place, and I am decidedly of opinion that the services of such a person as I have endeavoured to describe are absolutely indispensable. The duties I allow would be arduous, particularly at the commencement, but after the second visit, the arrangements would be simple, easy, and, at the same time, very complete. You will observe, that had such a person been previously appointed, the sweeping change upon the North Midland Railway would not have been allowed to take place, for this officer would have been made acquainted with all the leading facts of the case, and would have communicated them to General Pasley, who, in the course of his duty, would have written to the Directors, that they must not make such a sudden alteration until they were prepared to replace the old hands by equally efficient men, and that before they were placed upon an engine, the characters of those men would have been required, and in a very few minutes, from the manner the books were kept, General Pasley would himself have ascertained who and what they were, without having recourse to any bolstered-up character. I feel confident that the Board of Trade, General Pasley, and the public will see the propriety of making such an appointment. Some may ask, how is this officer's travelling expenses ever to be paid? I am certain that the Government would have no possible objection, seeing that it is for the benefit of the travelling public and their safety, neither can I see that any Directors would object to it, as it would not interfere with them in a pecuniary point of view. All that would be inquired into, would simply be the efficient working of the line, and Directors certainly would never object to have their meritorious conduct described. Moreover, steady enginemen would have a pride in having their names recorded at head quarters. In fact, it would be a great stimulus to good conduct; it would also prevent any superintendent giving a false bolstered-up character, when he knew it would be immediately detected when the party's name came to be recorded upon his new appointment.

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## LETTER V.

Birmingham, February 21, 1843.

THE observations of Mr. Hudson, Chairman of the York and North Midland Railway, at the general meeting of that Company, held on the 13th of February, demand, I think, a few observations from me as having taken an interest in the ill-advised economy on the North Midland Railway. The cause of Mr. Hudson bringing forth that scheme at such an uncalled-for time, I presume was, that he was perfectly aware that he

could not be contradicted in your journal previous to the North Midland general meeting. I exceedingly regret this circumstance; but, however, I hope you will indulge me by inserting a few remarks upon the extraordinary speech, so far as it relates to the North Midland Railway.

Mr. Hudson remarked, that "he was anxious to have carried out on that line the same economy, and see the same views acted upon, which had been done with so much success upon the York and North Midland Railway." He also stated, that "he had yet to learn that expenses and large wages were the best things that could be adopted to add to the public safety." In carrying out this unprecedented economy, that he has created great and unaccountable expenses and sacrifice of life there can be no doubt; and those expenses which have been created, were for the purpose of effecting a saving of wages on the enginemen of about 7*l.* per week. He alleges, that the Board of Trade holds out that the old men were immaculate. It does not appear that they did any such thing; but true it is, that the characters of the old men, as enginemen, previous to the change, were blameless, which will appear from the default-book of the Company, besides other collateral evidence. I am sorry I have had so little time, otherwise I would have furnished their true characters (but they shall be forthcoming), which will prove that the greater proportion of them were bred in precisely the same manner as that highly-talented gentleman, Mr. Cabrey, upon whom so much praise is lavished. I am prepared to discuss locomotive matters either practically or theoretically at any time Mr. Cabrey may think proper, and I beg to state that I am not unacquainted with his locomotive management on the York and North Midland Railway. Mr. Hudson further refers to the character of the old men, as a proof of the present enginemen being superior to the old; "he would take the periods of arrival of the London mail trains in York for a fortnight before the old men were out, and a fortnight after the new men were appointed. He would first take the period that elapsed from the 11th to 24th December, and then that which elapsed between the 29th January and the 2nd February." Here he compares 13 days of the old men with 3 days of the new; why not have taken all the trains, *goods' included*, that were late for one month before the 24th December, and one month after, and compared the regularity of the former with the irregularity of the latter, and also the condition of the engines on their arrival with that of the former? If he had done so, he must have blushed at the comparison. Again, he states that a good deal has been said about the fatal accident on the North Midland Railway, and that much blame was cast upon the Directors. If he wishes the blame to be removed from the Directors, then it must inevitably fall upon the much-lauded Mr. Cabrey, for it was he that engaged Jenkins, at Newcastle, and recommended him to be put on the North Midland Railway. Mr. Cabrey knew well his character; he was a discharged fireman of his own, and he would not again employ him on the York and North Midland Railway. Certainly, if he was unfit to be a fireman upon that line, he, of course, was far more unfit to be a driver on the North Midland Railway. Mr. Cabrey also engaged David Fletcher, who was twice previously convicted for reckless driving, and was discharged from the North Midland in a

very short space of time for the same conduct. Let Mr. Cabrey's talents be bright as they may, no one can say that they were properly applied in the above two instances. The bold front Mr. Hudson presents to the recommendations of the Board of Trade, only convinces me the more of the absolute necessity of Government investing the Board of Trade with immediate powers, sufficient to make such as Messrs. Hudson and Cabrey, and others who may attempt the like, act with more prudence in future, so that the lives of the public shall not be sacrificed. When Mr. Cabrey was close beside Mr. Hudson, why did he not put him right when he alleged that the old enginemen had put in oatmeal into the boilers of the engines to get them into difficulty and cause destruction to the engines? Mr. Cabrey must have known that the oatmeal was put in for the purpose of stopping the leaks of the tubes, and not long ago, before the improvement of the fire-boxes and the ferruling of the tubes, there was scarce ever an engine sent out without having either oatmeal or bran put into the boiler. What would Mr. Hudson think of using horse-dung in the boiler, which would be preferable to anything else; and, I dare say, Mr. Cabrey could tell Mr. Hudson that he has put many a bucketfull of horse-dung into a boiler, when he worked the colliery-engine in Northumberland. With reference to the assertion, that the extent of the damage done by the fatal accident will be about 200*l.*, Mr. Hudson appealed to Mr. Cabrey to substantiate what he stated, and Mr. Cabrey said it would be considerably under 200*l.* Both these gentlemen must think that the public are possessed of a great deal of gullibility to suppose that such an assertion would be believed, when the first, second, and third-class carriages on that occasion were shivered to pieces, and would cost the Company upwards of 500*l.*, besides other damage, and, in addition, the repair of the engine, and which, from the description I had of it at the time of the accident, will of itself cost upwards of 500*l.*; the cost of the crank axle alone will be upwards of 70*l.*

Mr. Hudson asserted, that "all the engines were in a shocking state of repair when the new Directors came into office." Quite the contrary was the fact; for I believe they were all in the best state of repair, with the exception of two engines, and that not more than two men were employed in executing ordinary repairs, while ever since the new men were put on, above twelve men have been employed, working over time, and still are unable to repair the frequent damage. I would ask Mr. Hudson, how many engines have been sent to the manufacturers at Leeds to get new tubes and fire-boxes, which they never had occasion to do under the old hands?

But if the assertion had been true, why did they not discharge Mr. Marshall for being incapable of superintending the repairs? Instead of that, they increased his salary. What ridiculous inconsistency!

In my last letter I referred to the great dissatisfaction that prevailed upon the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway; but it is very gratifying for me to state, that the engineers applied to the Superintendent to redress their grievances, and much to his honour he settled all differences, and now the greatest harmony prevails. But not so with the Grand Junction enginemen and their Superintendent, for they sent a petition

to the Board of Directors; but instead of doing as he was respectfully requested, the Superintendent put up a public notice that he had sent it to Mr. Locke for his consideration. It would appear that this Superintendent is of opinion that Mr. Locke has more power than the whole Board. However, more of this by and by.

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## LETTER VI.

Birmingham, March 21, 1843.

WHEN I first addressed you on the 26th of December last, upon the impolicy of the North Midland Directors' imprudent, lamentable, and ever-to-be-remembered change of their enginemen, and predicted that awful and fatal consequences would ensue, and which prediction was most woefully realised, after the written pledge they gave to the Board of Trade, that they would in future take care not to have recourse to any measures that would endanger the safety of the public, I certainly did not anticipate that I would so soon have occasion to inform you that within the last twenty days they have taken steps which may be fraught with even more frightful loss of life, if they be not very promptly and effectually altered.

At Clay Cross Tunnel, close by the north end of it, Mr. Stephenson's Coal Railway joins, from which the coal trains get upon the North Midland Railway, and immediately proceed through the tunnel. Formerly there were two watchmen by day and two by night at this end; at the other end there was one watchman by day and one by night, and with this number it not unfrequently happened that, with all their vigilance and care, it was with difficulty they could prevent accident. The above efficient number is now reduced to one watchman by day and another by night, for both ends of the tunnel! I do not know a place upon any railway which requires more vigilance and attention than this particular spot. This tunnel is  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles long, and rises from the north end of it 16 feet per mile; it is uncommonly wet; the rails are always in a slippery condition, so much so, that when a coal train is heavy the fireman is obliged to have recourse to that frightful risk of standing upon the buffer-bar of the engine, and continuing to throw sand upon the rails all the way through, to make the wheels of the engine adhere to the rails, and it is no uncommon occurrence that, with all this, a train comes to a dead stand. Suppose a heavy coal train enters the tunnel, and does come to a stand still, and the watchman's attention is taken up at the other end, the tunnel becomes filled with steam, a passenger train follows, and no signal being given that the tunnel is blocked up (no person being there to give it), the train enters with its accustomed speed, and need I depict to you the awful consequences! The collision takes place; and what could the more fortunate passenger do, who might not be killed, under the excitement, and in a tunnel filled with fire, steam, darkness, destruction, and screams of the most horrid description? It would be next to a miracle if even a single soul were saved to relate the sad event. Is it not the bounden duty of the Direc-

tors to take every possible means in their power to increase vigilance at such an important point, to prevent such a scene occurring? The misfortune is, as the law at present stands, if such a disaster were to take place, the Directors would go scatheless.

At Clay Cross station they have removed one watchman by day and another by night.

From Stretton shunt (a place of almost equal importance with the tunnel) they have removed two switchmen. At this place it is where all the coal trains shunt from the main line, to allow the passenger trains to proceed. Since this change, when the brakesman, or fireman of the coal train, observes a passenger train coming on (*you must notice they have now a double duty, or, I may rather say, a treble duty, to perform, for they must look out before and behind, and either the one or the other act as switchman*) the brakesman or fireman must leap from the train while at full speed, and shift the points to get off the main line, and if this be not done as quick as lightning a collision cannot be avoided, for there is no one there appointed to run with a signal to stop the passenger train, and should either of those men fall in his leap, fatal results would occur. Is it not unreasonable to impose a duty upon men which is fraught with such imminent danger to themselves, although there were no train close behind them?

At Ambergate limekilns they have also removed two watchmen, one by day and another by night—a place also of great importance to have a sufficiency of men to watch the approach of the trains.

It would be wasting your valuable space to comment upon the above facts; they are such as do not require the evidence of the Company's books, which the public have not access to, to verify my statements. A visit to the several spots will show that I have advanced nothing but the truth.

It is true that this economising Directory have effected a saving of nine men, equal to 8*l.* 12*s.* per week; but are they justified in creating this saving, when the public safety is placed in such jeopardy? This saving may lead to the G.F.R. that was proposed to be given to the new Directors, which you commented upon the other week; but no matter to what extent human life may be sacrificed, provided the principle be carried out! They surely cannot plead insubordination in this instance, as they unjustly did in the former.

This change the more fully impresses upon my mind the imperative necessity of some Government measure, for the purpose of watching all railways more closely, particularly while the present mania for economy prevails. When a fatal accident occurs General Pasley visits the scene, reports upon it, and gives the Directors a caution; they declare there are none more sorry for the occurrence than they, and then the matter drops. All this does not prevent other equally dangerous changes being resorted to; neither does it restore life, nor sooth the feelings of the relatives of the departed. General Pasley must see that he strictly cannot ascertain the doings of Railway Directors without an inferior officer; for, in the high situation which he holds, it is absolutely impossible for him individually to arrive at it. An officer under him would have little difficulty in furnishing him with even the anticipation of a dan-

gerous change. It is evident that all the Board of Trade's valuable recommendations are disregarded. Suppose that General Pasley were to visit the North Midland Railway, or any other line, it would be impossible for him to notice the facts I have related; neither could it be expected that any one belonging to the line would inform him of the dangerous change, and, of course, if he passed over the line scatheless, he would immediately take it for granted that all was in the best possible condition as to the safety of the public, when quite the contrary was the fact. There is a greater necessity for my remark being attended to, when I do assure you, that there are two or three railways on which they are anticipating to carry out changes fraught with evil. I am carefully watching them; but, you know, I dare not even hint at them until they do take place. For instance, one superintendent says he shall save the amount of his salary by next meeting, in reductions alone; another declared, if he could not make a total change in one month, he at least could accomplish it in six months; another, if I carry out "so and so," I shall have a present of 100*l.* I could tell what is meant by "so and so," but I dare not do it at present.

The Board of Trade must not place too much confidence in the paragraph of their Report in your journal, page 340, bottom of the second column.

I may here take the opportunity of remarking, that the North Midland Directors have been made to feel experimentally that they most unjustifiably and prematurely discharged their former enginemen, for they have, within the last fortnight, been compelled to pay over to all the men they discharged (*the men did not leave, as alleged by the Directors*) a week's wages in lieu of the week's notice they ought to have given, which amounted to about 63*l.* 18*s.*! This is a sore stroke upon Sir John Simpson's economy GIFT FUND.

This 63*l.* 18*s.* alone would have kept on all their former experienced hands another year, and saved all the extraordinary expenses that have been incurred, as well as the loss of life!

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## LETTER VII.

Birmingham, April 20, 1843.

In my letter of the 7th February, which appeared in your journal on the 11th of the same month, I stated that the greatest dissatisfaction prevailed on the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway, but at that time I was unable to say whether this dissatisfaction emanated from the Directors or not. I pledged myself, however, that I would not fail to put you and the public in full possession of the facts, and I embrace the earliest opportunity of redeeming the pledge given in a subsequent letter, dated the 24th of February, which appeared in your journal of the 18th ultimo. I stated that the enginemen had applied to the Superintendent to redress their grievances, which he complied with, and the greatest harmony prevailed, but since that time I find that what he then did to



obtain harmony was a mere trick upon the men, which will appear from the following facts:—

On the 20th instant, all the enginemen received a written notice that their wages were to be reduced 8*d.* per day, and they were requested to give a week's notice if they did not intend to submit to the reduction proposed. The Locomotive Superintendent, Mr. M'Connell, has long had such a thing in contemplation, although he has always been aware that the enginemen would not submit to such an unreasonable reduction, which brings their wages to 6*s.* per day for enginemen, and 5*s.* per day for night pilotmen, reckoning 12 hours for each day's work. In anticipation that his engine-drivers would not submit, he has been traversing the country for some time past to obtain men, but in his personal applications he has invariably failed, and latterly he has had recourse to letters, and has sent emissaries to Liverpool, Leeds, Stockton-upon-Tees, the late North Midland men, &c. &c. The North Midland discharged men wrote him that they would not accept of a situation on equal or worse terms than those they refused on the North Midland. In other quarters, several of the men applied to very properly asked on what line they were wanted, but to keep the movements as secret as possible, they received for answer that they could not be informed of the name of the line, unless they fixed themselves to accept of the situation offered. Besides this sweeping change of enginemen, 11 switchmen have got notice to leave, and those that are to be kept are to be screwed down to the starving point of 1*l.* to 16*s.* per week.

If this ill-advised scheme be allowed to be carried out, it may be expected that even more fatal consequences will ensue, than happened so very lately on the North Midland Railway. It astonishes me not a little how gentlemen so well informed as the Chairman, and two or three other members of the Board are, can possibly allow themselves to be swayed by so inexperienced a man as Mr. M'Connell. He cannot be possessed of so much practical experience in the management of a railway as to take upon himself such an extraordinary responsibility as carrying out so dangerous a scheme with strange drivers, and with a deficiency of switchmen upon a difficult line like the Birmingham and Gloucester; for he never was a superintendent on any line but the one he is at present on, and that has only been for a very short period. His experience can only have been obtained while he was an under-foreman in an extensive locomotive engine-manufactory at Liverpool, the head of which is remarkable for his pre-eminent abilities in locomotive management; but I am not aware that the manufactory has a railway within its gates, with difficult inclines and dangerous tunnels, so that it may be able to turn out the most perfect superintendents, as it is celebrated for the superiority of its locomotive engines. But this youthful superintendent has an immeasurable conceit of his own talents, for he says he can see no difficulty in making shoemakers or tailors experienced engine-drivers in a very short space of time. Mr. Locke has a very different opinion, for by his advertisement for enginemen for the Paris and Rouen Railway, he would have no applications but from long practised men, and he has selected some of the best men in England, and given them above 7*s.* per

day, which is more than 8*s.* 6*d.* in this country. Mr. M'Connell has stated, that so soon as he has effected the reduction of the enginemmen he will reduce the firemen to 3*s.* 9*d.* per day.

It is not my intention to occupy much of your space. I shall, for the present, only take a slight view of the line, leaving minor points, which, however, are of great importance, till a future day.

At the Gloucester end of the line there are three switchmen to be discharged (at least they have notice); there are fifteen pair of points to attend to, and when these men are discharged, the duty of shifting those points will devolve upon the firemen. As I observed on a former occasion, if the fireman should fall in leaping, what would become of the train of passengers; for on the 12th instant, with the three switchmen, they allowed the engine and tender of the quarter-past 8 train to get off the line, and detained it one hour. Even after this lesson, it appears that it is intended to do away with this useful class of men.

At Cheltenham there are not fewer than ten pair of points, and no switchman.

At Ashchurch, the day policeman is to be done away with. This is a place of the utmost importance at which to have men placed to watch the trains approaching, for the Tewkesbury branch comes in here, and collisions can be prevented only by the vigilance and activity of the enginemman. In foggy weather they must run all hazards of a "pitch in" occasionally. How will this work with entire strangers?

At Spetchley, day policemen are proposed to be done away with, and five pairs of points are to be attended to by the firemen.

The Lickey incline I believe to be one of the most dangerous inclines in the kingdom; and what may happen with a whole set of new drivers put on at once, and one brakesman out of three discharged?

At Coffin Tunnel, which is about a quarter of a mile long, they have already discharged two policemen, one from each end. This tunnel has never been properly finished at either end, and the consequence is, that it often occurs that waggon-loads of loose rock fall down and obstruct the line. Now, suppose that only a small piece of rock were to fall down, and no one were there to remove it from off the rails, is it at all possible for an enginemman coming out of a dark tunnel to be able to perceive the obstruction in sufficient time? The consequence would be that the engine and tender would be thrown off the line, and the train of passengers dashed against the sides of the tunnel. In fact, this tunnel all through is far from being perfect; it is propped up in several places, and there is to be no one placed to watch it.

At the curve leading to the London junction it is also proposed to remove the switchmen. At this curve there are five pairs of points. Suppose the bank engine were crossing the line at these points, and the fireman off the engine to turn them, and a passenger-train coming down that heavy incline at the same time, by reason of the curve the enginemman of the passenger train could not see the bank engine crossing. Coming down at full speed, he would seldom observe it until he went right over it, and perhaps the whole train would be thrown over the embankment.

It is allowed by every one that the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway requires very steady and experienced men, with a thorough knowledge of the line to work it with safety. I believe the Directors allow that their present staff of enginemen may be equalled, but cannot be surpassed, for steadiness and attention to their duty, and they would be sorry to lose them. One Director observed the other day, that he admitted the reduction would be hard upon the men; still it would not press so hard upon them as the present state of things was pressing upon the proprietors, for they had lost thousands of pounds, and it was only by economy they could retrieve their affairs. Is there no other method to be found to retrieve the extravagant and ruinous expenditure of a railway but endangering the public safety and screwing down the wages of enginemen, firemen, and policemen, to starvation point? If my opinion were asked, I could point out a variety of better methods, and perhaps I may do so on a future day. I adhere to my former pledge, and shall watch the movements of the Managers of this line, and of several others, who have not gone quite so far *yet*.

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#### LETTER VIII.

Birmingham, June 8, 1843.

IN reading your paper of the 28th ultimo, respecting the collision that took place at the Nine Elms station of the Southampton Railway, the reason which you assign for the accident called forth my attention, it having arisen from over-fatigue, no matter what the cause of that fatigue was. In a previous letter I noticed that every one was aware that over-fatigue has an unbounded influence on mankind, for it has often been the case that a very fatigued man has lain down in the depths of snow, and slept as soundly as if on a feather bed. No one can bear better testimony to this fact than General Pasley; and I would especially call his particular attention to the following.

On the Manchester and Leeds Railway it has been the practice for some time past with the enginemen who run goods' trains during the night, that for six days in the week they have run those trains from sixteen hours to seventeen hours per day on the average. This labour has been so severe upon them, that some of them have actually found themselves asleep upon the engine towards the latter end of the week; and when the Superintendent was remonstrated with upon this severe work, the answer of this philanthropic gentleman was, "if you cannot do it others will." The obvious cause of this answer was the reduction of wages, for he has, at the Leeds end of the line, some men running at the low rate of from 3*s.* 4*d.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* per day. I am happy to say there are still honourable exceptions remaining to the present system of railway wages,—parties who are pursuing the wise and prudent course of treating their workmen with humanity and justice, and thereby insuring safety to the public and prosperity to the proprietors.

What shall I say? The mighty have fallen. The London and Bir-

mingham Company have descended from that high pinnacle of fame (in this respect) on which they have hitherto stood. I do not intend at present to enter into particulars, as it is my intention very shortly to enter into a very minute detail of all the railways relative to their present state of locomotive management, giving due praise to those who have kept the true, steady, and prudent course, to the promotion of the interests of the proprietary, and censuring others according to the extent to which they have gone; and this I shall do without fear or trembling, for be assured I shall, as I have hitherto done, adhere strictly to the TRUTH, and it shall conquer.

I cannot but take this opportunity of making one more remark with regard to Mr. M'Connell of the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway, upon his new mode of making and drilling new hands into the best system of locomotive engine driving. According to my figures, after the extra salary he is to receive for his achievement in reducing the expenditure, the proprietors will for every 100*l.* be benefitted to the extent—of what? One half farthing and .8785 of half a farthing per annum per share; and for this most extraordinary saving, the proprietors have the risk of losing about half the extent of property that was lost upon the North Midland Railway upon the carrying out of its memorable change, the extent of which is well known to all who have any acquaintance with a railway. Mr. M'Connell has six fitters at Bromsgrove, and when the work of the shed and railway is over for the day, the pilot-engine is taken out. The men are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and they all get into the tender with the exception of two. No. 1 acts as engine-man the first night, and No. 2 acts fireman, and they run up and down the line during the night, Mr. M'Connell acting as adjutant. The second night No. 2 acts engine-man, and No. 3 fireman, and so on until all the six have had their turns as engine-men, and when that is done, they commence again in the same manner. Will this saving overcome the expense of the nightly wear and tear of the engine, coke, oil, and tallow? I would most decidedly say *not* by many pounds per week. Distant shareholders should look to this most indefatigable economist, and judge for themselves whether he looks most to the interest of his own pocket or that of the proprietors.

I would strongly recommend to these pseudo economists to form a joint-stock Company, and establish a railway exclusively for the purpose of bringing forward the most efficient and cheap drivers. I shall just make one other remark, and that will be on the Birmingham and Derby Railway, the Directors of which have most laudably taken the proper means of securing a real and substantial saving for the true benefit of the Company. If other Directors would follow the example, there would be no necessity for tormenting and teasing those men who have the lives of the public committed to their charge. The Birmingham and Derby Directors mean to discharge *drones* who have nothing to do but walk about with canes in their hands, shoot sparrows, &c., &c., and this will produce a saving upon this short line of from 1,500*l.* to 1,600*l.*

The following fully corroborates my allegations, relative to locomotive

management at the present time being conducted in the alarming manner in which I have constantly pointed out; the following is a very striking proof of it:—

Last night about 7.40, when the passenger train was on the top of the Lickey bank waiting for the arrival of the *Amusement*\* engine to assist them on the line a little way as usual, but, not keeping his proper time, the train started without her; however, the *Amusement*, conducted by John Moseley, fitter, came up at a slapping speed and pitched right into the train, broke her draw-bar, and did her other damage, causing the passengers, by the sudden concussion, to be jumbled all together. A fatal result nearly occurred in the third-class carriage, which was prevented only by mere accident. This carriage was the last of the train. The brakesman is always in this carriage, and it is customary for him to keep the door open, for some reason to his own advantage in the performance of his duty, but in this instance it was most providentially shut. Had this not been the case, God knows how many persons would have been thrown under the wheels of the *Amusement* engine. No thanks to the locomotive management, that life to a great extent has not been sacrificed.

As it is a notorious fact that railways generally are not carrying the public in perfect safety, I would, before the present session of Parliament ends, call the attention not only of General Pasley, but of the Board of Trade, to the present actual state of locomotive management.

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## LETTER IX.

Birmingham, June 19, 1843.

IN your last week's paper your correspondent "M." states, "that much has been written upon the subject of engine-drivers' wages, but one view of the subject has only been taken."† I would beg leave to

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\* This is a new name to the engine, because it is the one that Mr. M.C. drills his fitters on.

† The following is the letter referred to:—

SIR,—Although a great deal has been written on the subject of the wages of engine-drivers, yet one view of the question appears to have been altogether overlooked; namely, that while nearly every other class of working men were obliged to submit to a reduction of wages, owing to the general distress of the country, the enginemen, until a comparatively recent period, received as high pay as in the most prosperous times.

I purpose, with your permission, giving a few facts connected with the origin and progress of this class of workmen; from which, I believe, the natural inference will be, that they have hitherto been very liberally paid, and that it is not unreasonable to expect them now to be content, at least until times improve, with a lower rate of wages.

I was very well acquainted with the manufactory of Messrs. Stephenson and Co., at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, when that was the only place in England where locomotive engines were built, and the Liverpool and Manchester the only railway where they were used. In those days it was usual to send an engine from the workshop accom-

inform that gentleman, that *he* has not taken a proper view of the subject, for every sentence of his letter contains a misapprehension. Before he began to set forth his views in your journal he should have made himself thoroughly acquainted with the subject he was to write upon.

In the first paragraph of his letter he states, "that engine-drivers have, to a very recent period, always received as high rate of wages as in the most prosperous times." This is not true, for enginemen at one time received upon the Liverpool and Manchester line from 45*s.* to 50*s.* per week.

In the third paragraph, he says, he "was well acquainted with the manufactory of Messrs. Stephenson and Co., at Newcastle on Tyne." I shall point out from his own statement, that he knew nothing at all about that manufactory, at least so far as the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was connected with it. He also says, that for the first three years the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was the only railway where locomotive engines were used. Now, the Stockton and Darlington was in use prior to the Liverpool and Manchester, and many of the North-umberland colliery lines used locomotive engines prior to that. In the same paragraph, he states, "it was usual to send an engine from the

panied by one of the mechanics (technically termed fitters,) who had been engaged in making it, and who consequently knew how to put it together in working order on the railway. It was also usual for this man, instead of returning to the manufactory, to remain with the engine to work it, being, in fact, the best man that could be selected for that purpose; and his wages as a fitter being from 5*s.* to 6*s.* per day, it was, of course, necessary to give him rather more, to induce him to remain; hence the origin of 7*s.* per day, the usual rate of enginemen's wages.

In process of time, when locomotive engines became more numerous, it was found difficult to procure mechanics for enginemen, and an inferior class was brought into employment; these were the stokers or firemen, who, from long acquaintance with the engine, and practice under the directions of their immediate superiors, the enginemen, had acquired some knowledge of the machine, and the capability of working it. The introduction of this class of men was, however, so gradual as not to affect the rate of wages, which still continued 7*s.*, though it is clear that that sum, which might be fair and reasonable enough for fitters, who at their own trade could earn 5*s.* or 6*s.* daily, was very high pay for men who were originally labourers, and as such well paid with 2*s.* 6*d.* or 3*s.*

I believe the great majority of the present enginemen are of this latter class; and when they and their advocates so strongly insist upon no reduction, let them consider what their position would have been had they never become either enginemen or firemen at all, but remained in their original situation as labourers.

A few words, in conclusion, on a very general, but I cannot help thinking, groundless fear, that the public safety will be compromised by the attempted reductions. That accidents *have* occurred, is to be attributed, not to the principle of reducing wages, but to the imprudent manner in which the reductions were carried into effect. In almost every department of labour wages have been reduced, and we find workmen as efficient as before; why should enginemen be an exception? Let it be remembered, too, that in nearly every case of accident to a train, the men on the engine run the greatest risk of injury; and if personal danger will not make men careful, it is difficult to imagine what will. I am, Sir, yours, respectfully,

workshop, accompanied by one of the fitters, and it was usual for this man to remain." This is not true. When Messrs. S. & Co. forwarded the engines to the Liverpool and Manchester line at the outset, there was no fitter sent with them; they were all fitted up on the line by Messrs. Mellon and Sons, under the immediate direction of Mr. Stephenson himself, and the only time that that company sent a man from their establishment was some time after the commencement, when they sent six engines, and they were accompanied by Ralph Hutchison, who was then an under fireman (and now principal foreman to that establishment.) He superintended the fitting up of those engines, and as each of them got completed, he had them tried up and down the line; but he never ran a train with an engine, nor did Messrs. S. & Co. send a fitter from their work and make him an engineman. The following particular account will show that the men who worked that line were never fitters; they were regularly-bred drivers, and accustomed to locomotive engines.

When the work was in progress, Mark Wakefield, Robert Hope, and John Dunn, ballasted with the *Lancashire Witch*; Thomas George and Robert Creed ballasted with the *Twin Sisters*; and the reason of there being so many men to two engines was, that the engines were worked night and day; these men were engine-drivers previous to this. At the opening of the line, Mark Wakefield ran the *Rocket* for the premium against the *Sanspareil* and the *Novelty*; Timothy Arkwood ran the *Sanspareil*; and the *Novelty* was run by an experienced man appointed by Braithwaite and Co. At the opening of the line for the public, Robert Creed ran the first passenger train with the *Northumberland*; Thomas George ran the second with the *North Star*; John Wakefield ran the third train with the *Phoenix*; and Mark Wakefield ran the fourth with the *Rocket*. [This last-named engine unfortunately killed Mr. Huskisson.] The other enginemen were John Robson, who ran the *Comet*; Robert Weatherburn, who ran the *Victory* (and who ran a trial of strength against Mr. Bury's *Liver*, which was conducted by Thomas George); Martin Weatherburn, who ran the *Mars*; Poys Hall, who ran the *Vulcan*, and Robert Kirkup, who ran the *Majestic*. I am of opinion that this will most decidedly bear me out in saying that "M." knows nothing at all as to who were appointed enginemen upon that line at the time he states.

He says, again, that the fitters in the "first instance received from 5s. to 6s. per day, and that it was of course necessary to give them rather more to induce them to remain, and hence the origin of 7s. per day." Here he is at fault again. There were no fitters employed, nor were day wages given to the enginemen for the first three years; they were paid by the trip, varying as to circumstances from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. per trip, and earning from 45s. to 50s. per week, and they were paid for all over-time besides. The 7s. per day came on after this to regulate the wages more steadily, and that all enginemen should be paid more alike; and, after due consideration, it was allowed by Mr. Stephenson that 7s. per day was quite little enough for running the risk of their lives, and the great responsibility that was attached to the vocation.

The most eminent engineers of the present day are still of the same opinion, for there is no comparison between the duties of engine-drivers and those of other labourers. All the imprudent reductions that have been resorted to of late have been recommended by superintendents, who are possessed of no great intellectual endowments, and they are not sanctioned by such highly gifted men as a Stephenson, a Locke, and a Brunel, as the lines which these gentlemen still retain the command of will bear ample testimony. It has ever been and still is the opinion of Messrs. Stephenson and Bury that a fitter is not the most proper person to be an engine-driver. The fitting of an engine has nothing to do with the working of it, the main requisite being an acquaintance with the line and its gradients. The same reasoning might be applied to the maker of a violin,—that as a matter of course he should be superior to a Paganini. I consider that a fireman who has been three years upon one line, serves as it were a regular apprenticeship to be a competent driver. It is a notorious fact that the majority of fitters who have been put on as drivers without a previous knowledge of the line, have caused accidents, and several of them fatal. In my last I informed you of one on the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway from this cause, and I shall now relate to you another circumstance which happened the other week on the Grand Junction, which was nearly attended by very serious consequences. Mr. Allen, Superintendent at Crewe, sent a fitter of the name of Samuel Hazeldine down to Warrington with an engine, and to return again with a train of goods. He left Warrington with four waggons, and when he reached Preston Brook he had no steam. There he had to remain until he raised his steam again, during which time the brakesman and fireman left the train and were absent when the steam got up. The fitter set off without them, and when he reached the top of the bank he got six more waggons attached, and proceeded again by himself until he arrived at a place called Acton, and there came to a stand-still. He then took the most imprudent step of all, for he parted the train, and shifted the first part upon the down line, dangerously obstructing it without a signal of any description whatever. If a train had come down the line after the waggons were placed there what would have been the consequences! He then proceeded back to the other part of his train, and was adopting the most dangerous expedient of returning to the top of Preston Bank with them again, when he was most fortunately stopped by the policeman, as the Liverpool luggage train was due. Had those two trains met from opposite directions, the collision would have been of the most dreadful description. The conduct of Superintendent Allen can in no way be justified; but the most extraordinary proceeding of all, when the matter was investigated by the officials, was, that the brakesman and fireman were discharged, and the fitter retained. I admit that it was quite right to discharge those men for leaving the train, but at the same time the fitter should have been discharged also, for he cannot in any way be justified in proceeding with the train without his fireman, as he ought to have known his own inefficiency, even with the two men. An experienced engineman, knowing the great



responsibility, would not have proceeded from any place without his necessary attendants.

To return to your correspondent "M.;" in the third paragraph, he says, "he believes that the greater proportion of engine-drivers are from the class of labourers." If they are properly trained, from what better class can they be obtained? He appears to overlook how those labourers are raised to the situation of drivers. They generally are young men, first put into the shed, for years cleaning the engines and assisting the fitters; then they are appointed to put the fires in the engines, raise the steam, and have the engines ready to go out; next, they have to act as firemen for years before they are appointed to be drivers, and their qualifications are well tested before this. I would ask "M." one question. How many of the present upstart superintendents are from the same class, and placed there from favour and interest, and not from qualification? I would beg to apply "M.'s" observation to the superintendents:—"Let them consider what their position would have been had they never become petty superintendents at all, but remained in their original situation as inferior fitters."

In conclusion, your correspondent says, "he cannot help thinking that a very groundless fear exists that the public safety will be sacrificed by the attempt at reductions." Was life not sacrificed consequent upon the North Midland reductions? Did I not point out in my last that life was nearly sacrificed upon the Birmingham and Gloucester? I must refer once more to the imprudence of superintendents upon this line. A short time ago, Mr. Crawford, Superintendent at the Gloucester station, took an engine out of the shed and a fitter with him, and was crossing the line when a passenger train was due. There is a sharp curve, so that the engineman could not see his master crossing the line until he (the engineman) was close upon him. Mr. Crawford waived his handkerchief for him to stop the train, otherwise he would have run right over him, and, fortunately, he did get his engine stopped within a few yards, but he had to remain with his train until the other got up to the crossings, and out of the way upon the other line. If any of the drivers had unnecessarily taken an engine out, and caused delay and danger to a whole train of passengers, he would have been discharged instantly, and upon the same principle of good management Mr. McConnell should have discharged Mr. Crawford, in order to caution other imprudent superintendents against such acts. A similar occurrence took place on a neighbouring line, which I shall have occasion to take notice of when I treat upon its general locomotive management.

In my last letter I eulogised the Directors of the Birmingham and Derby Railway; I must now condemn Mr. Kirtley, Locomotive Superintendent of that line. On the 12th instant he sent all the enginemen notice that their wages were to be reduced to 6s. per day, and hoped that "they would accede to it cheerfully;" while, at the same time, he was cheerfully accepting an augmentation of his own salary. In a day or two after, he found that he would be obliged to carry his reductions still further; for by the aforesaid reductions, and ~~his~~ addition, the

Company became losers to the extent of 6*l.* 8*s.* 0½*d.* per annum. On Friday he informed them that he meant to reduce the number of enginemen and firemen; that two men were to do three men's work; that they would have to run double trips; and to make up their minds immediately, for he was determined to commence on Monday with the double trips; and if they did not accept, he was prepared to put on a new staff altogether. By this change the proprietors will, for every 100*l.* share, be benefitted 2½*d.* per annum.

If this do not call forth the serious attention of the Government, I know not what will. The engineman who leaves Derby in the morning has to be on duty upwards of twenty hours, and has it not in his power to reach home the whole time. The engineman who leaves Birmingham has to be on duty upwards of nineteen hours. I would put it to the faculty of Great Britain to say, if the constitution of man is able to stand such work, at the same time taking into account the weather he is exposed to. If Government do not think it their duty to interfere for the safety of the public, locomotive management will get to such a pitch that life will be sacrificed to an incalculable extent, and *then* the Legislature will deem it their duty to interfere.

I shall conclude with this remark, that I cannot imagine how Directors can be so blind to their own interests, and those of the Companies over which they preside, as to sanction these proceedings. All the locomotive reductions that have hitherto taken place, have been overbalanced by the additional salary that has been given to the Superintendent. I have already pointed out this, and it stands uncontradicted. In the latter part of last year a long correspondence took place with the Board of Trade and the South-Western Directors, about a stage-coach not being admitted into the precincts of the Company's property, which continued for months; and, after all, the Company bade the Board of Trade defiance, and in Mr. Laing's concluding letter he intimated, that if the Directors did not comply, the Board of Trade would take the first opportunity of applying to Parliament for necessary powers. If the Board of Trade consider it absolutely necessary to apply to Parliament about a stage-coach, it is certainly far more important that they should look after the safety of the public in a matter like this.

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## LETTER X.

Birmingham, July 5, 1843.

A LETTER of mine appeared in your journal of the 29th April, relative to the proposed reductions on the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway, the effect of which was that the police reductions were abandoned, but four enginemen and four firemen were discharged. When the enginemen received notice of the reduction, they all signed a remonstrance to the Directors, and this remonstrance was in the hands of the

Chairman a week before the Directors' meeting. Mr. M'Connell, the Superintendent, asserted that the remonstrance was not by general consent, and the Chairman, to satisfy himself, examined the men individually whether they were perfectly acquainted with it, when they all said they were. On the morning of the day of the meeting of the Directors, the men at the Gloucester end were led to understand that Mr. M'Connell was to put on his fitters at all hazards, which had the effect of intimidating two of the men, who sent a letter to Mr. M'C., treacherously betraying their fellow-workmen at the Birmingham end, who knew nothing at all about it. The fact was, that the very men who have gone in were the leaders and instigators of the remonstrance. Mr. M'C. discharged them, but *he gave them the best of written characters*. By the change, if Mr. M'C. be not a gainer, the proprietors are considerable losers. The *Amusement* engine has only been kept up very partially since my exposure of it. I omitted to say that to induce the fitters to run the risk of their lives, Mr. M'Connell gave each a sovereign. He feels now to his chagrin that he cannot carry out his visionary schemes to the advantage of the proprietors, and to keep the reductions apace with his augmented salary, he has recourse to the reduction of his poor cleaners' wages to 2s. 6d. per day, and his once highly favoured men, the fitters, he is reducing to 6s. per day. Even by this further reduction, years will not redeem the foolish expenditure he has created. While I am treating of Mr. M'C. I cannot look over his self-conceit in allowing himself even to be hinted at in a paper before the Institution of Civil Engineers as the inventor of the plan whereby the water in the tank or tender should be kept at a boiling temperature. This was in practice long before he had anything to do with a railway. Again, he stated that "he had invented a powerful brake." There is no originality in the brake referred to, neither is it capable of accomplishing what he asserts, when a slight snow is upon the rails; and when they are in a wet state, the new invented brake becomes quite useless. Through being applied to the driving wheels, when the train is at its velocity on the incline and the brake applied, the driving wheels slip when the rails are wet with the same velocity as when they revolve, the other four wheels being in their regular motion. Mr. M'C. must know that this constantly occurs, and that the engine-man has much more power over his engine with the common brake in such weather than with *the newly invented one*. I also differ with Mr. M'C. in his calculations of the expense per trip of the engine upon the Lickey incline. I do not intend to go further at present into this calculation, but when the next half-yearly statement makes its appearance I shall not lose sight of it. Before that document does make its appearance I would recommend that two or three proprietors of business habits should make a point of examining closely the locomotive department ledger, for I can assure them that much patch-work is resorted to in locomotive ledgers. I should wish Mr. M'C. to explain why he gives his clerks and cokemen a share of the coke premium, which belongs exclusively to the enginemen. The clerks can have no possible right to it.

In the letter referred to above I took notice of the incomplete state in which the Coffin Tunnel has been allowed to remain. I thought after it had been publicly taken notice of, and official orders given, the Directors would have lost no time in completing it, but the neglect need not be wondered at when they allow two of the bridges to be in a very perilous state. The first bridge below Camp Hill, within fifty yards, and right opposite the house of Mr. Wetherall, General Superintendent, is supported by brickwork, and withal is in a very rickety condition—so much so, that they have been obliged to remove the gravel from the top of it, and have recourse to two longitudinal beams supported at each end to carry the rails. Were those beams to spring or give way when a train was passing over, the engine would be thrown off the line, and the whole train precipitated over an embankment of twenty feet; and the consequences would of course prove fatal to an alarming extent. The third bridge below this is in an almost equally bad state. The brick walls which support the embankment and abutments of the bridge are “off the plumb,” and bilged out to a considerable extent, so that wooden props are resorted to to keep the bridge from falling. If one stands under these bridges and leans his back against the brickwork when a train passes over, it will make him tremble. No fault can be attached to General Pasley for any oversight at the opening of the line, for it was opened before his appointment, but from the state it is at present in, it now certainly calls for an inspection from him, so that he may order measures to be taken that the public safety shall not be endangered.

I shall now revert to the locomotive management of the Grand Junction Railway. It would baffle the most gifted on the line to know whence the direction emanates. If anything occurs that is of the smallest importance, and Mr. Trevethick, the reputed Locomotive Superintendent, be applied to, he immediately says he can do nothing until he has consulted Captain Huish, and when the Captain is non-plussed, he recommends Mr. T. to apply to Mr. Locke. There is likewise Mr. Norris, the Resident Engineer, who is invested with considerable powers, and this gentleman, so far as he interferes, acts in a very upright and straightforward manner. Mr. Trevethick is little else than a go-between betwixt Captain Huish and Superintendent Allen at Crewe. When Mr. Trevethick was expostulated with upon the system of making the enginemen and firemen play on a week day in place of the work they were compelled in their turns to do on a Sunday, he gave them answer that if they did not accede to it he could get others that would. It was rejoined that perhaps he would find a difficulty in getting so many as he would require (the North Midland was then in its glory); he then said if he could not accomplish it in one month he at least would do it in six months. I do not think that he is possessed of so much talent as to carry out such a feat on a line like the Grand Junction \* \* \* \* \*

Whether Captain Huish has found out his mistake in thinking that he could carry out reductions to the extent of his salary, I know not; but the fact appears to be, that he must be deficient somewhere. The enginemen were in the practice of receiving 5*l.* premium half-yearly for

good conduct, but at the last settlement it was only partially paid. The consequence would be serious towards any of the workmen, were they to depart in the smallest degree from *their* contract. I hold that officials on railways, however high, are equally bound to hold to the principle of integrity as the inferiors; and it has always been allowed that example has more force than precept. For some months this line has been worked in a very unhappy manner betwixt the enginemen and the firemen. It is attributed to the fact, that when the remonstrance was sent in to the Directors regarding the unjustness of the Sunday work, and being made to play on a week-day, the firemen were, as a punishment, reduced 6*d.* per day for signing the remonstrance. This was thought a great achievement by the officials, in causing dissension betwixt the engineman and his fireman, although it must be allowed by every one that the best interests and safety of railway travelling depend much upon the harmony that should always exist among this most important class of men.

I can see no difficulty in carrying on the locomotive department of this line at a saving of several thousands of pounds per annum to the proprietors, and at the same time allowing the enginemen to be well paid; but a host of captains, lieutenants, serjeants, and an almost innumerable body of corporals, would require to be discharged. The remarks of your correspondent, "Subscriber," on the the Brighton line are equally applicable to every Direction in the kingdom; all of them should engrave them with an iron pen on their hearts. If Captain Huish and the Directors would take pattern by Mr. Booth and the general management of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, they would find that they would add much to the prosperity of the Grand Junction proprietary. The Liverpool and Manchester Company were never in difficulty except on one occasion, and the gentlemanly conduct, good temper, and forbearance of Mr. Booth at that crisis reflect honour upon him. There is not a line in the kingdom on which greater harmony prevails, from the highest to the most humble.

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## LETTER XI.

Birmingham, July 12, 1843.

BEFORE I proceed further in discussing locomotive management, I must reply to your correspondent "M.," who takes upon himself to assume that I am "the advocate of the enginemen, and, possibly, their agent." I disclaim either the one or the other. My last letter, I am of opinion, will convince that gentleman that I go far beyond reach of what any engineman can arrive at. I most emphatically declare that I am not paid or employed for writing; what I write for is the "public safety." When alterations were anticipated on the Grand Junction and the Birmingham and Gloucester, I stated in my letter of the 7th of February, that I did not then know whether the Directors or the men were in error; it mattered not to me personally which party was in the wrong: but I pledged myself that after I had made inquiry I would

relate the facts. In advocating the "public safety," I necessarily brought forward the enginemen, and hence the assumption of my being the enginemen's advocate.

I think I am able to jog the memory of "M." and his informant, with respect to the original condition of the enginemen upon the Liverpool Railway. He finds fault with me that I went too far back in treating of the enginemen upon the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, and says that he confined his observation to a period subsequent to my observations, and that he commences from the introduction of the *Planet*. To gratify "M." I shall commence with the *Planet*. That engine came upon the line the same year that the railway was opened; it was No. 9, and was run by Thomas George. "M." further refers to engines of that class, and in order to put him right I shall mention a few of them and give the names of the enginemen, the majority of whom were bred enginemen. In the same paragraph, he asks, how many of the long list of enginemen I gave were originally mechanics? I answer him, NOT ONE. After the *Planet*, the engines that followed were the—

|                 |         |          |                     |
|-----------------|---------|----------|---------------------|
| <i>Majestic</i> | No. 10  | ..Run by | Robert Kirkup.      |
| <i>Mercury</i>  | " 11... | "        | Mark Wakefield.     |
| <i>Mars</i>     | " 12... | "        | Richard Creed.      |
| <i>Samson</i>   | " 13... | "        | Thomas Melburn.     |
| <i>Jupiter</i>  | " 14... | "        | Thomas Scott.       |
| <i>Goliath</i>  | " 15... | "        | Simon Fenwick.      |
| <i>Saturn</i>   | " 16... | "        | John Robson.        |
| <i>Sun</i>      | " 17... | "        | John Dunn.          |
| <i>Venice</i>   | " 18 .. | "        | John Wakefield.     |
| <i>Vulcan</i>   | " 19... | "        | Poys Hall.          |
| <i>Etna</i>     | " 20... | "        | John Wakefield.     |
| <i>Fury</i>     | " 21... | "        | Robert Creed.       |
| <i>Victory</i>  | " 22... | "        | Robert Weatherburn. |

Not one of the above list was ever a mechanic or fitter. The *Sun*, No. 17, went under a thorough repair at the Clarence Foundry, under the direction of Mr. Kennedy, and when she was repaired, a fitter of the name of Nelson came with her, and he certainly did run her on the line. So also with the *Dreadnought*, the *Bee*, and the *Liver*. These engines were made by Mr. Bury, but Nelson was never acknowledged as an engine-driver of the Liverpool and Manchester Company.

In "M.'s" second paragraph, he says, that 45s. or 50s. per week in the most prosperous times were certainly not the average wages. I did not say the average; I confined myself entirely to the Liverpool and Manchester line, as he himself did in his first letter. He notices that I bring forward four great names in defence of 7s. per day, and appears to think that I consider 7s. per day too little for an engineman. I never said 7s. was too little; I always said it was quite little enough, and I still maintain that it is. In his third paragraph, he says, that I must not consider him to be the advocate of the Superintendents. It appears to me that if he be not so, he is very much like it, for he does not attempt to contradict me, when I have so often stated that all the locomotive reductions have been overbalanced by the augmentation of the Superintendent's salary. In your observations upon the Gloucester

Committee, you say you have been informed that Mr. M'Connell has got a present of 150*l.* for the persevering manner in which he has carried out the reductions on that line; but you express a hope that your informant is not correct. Be your informant who he may, I can assure you that he is substantially correct, for I know an individual whom Mr. M'C. informed that he had received this 150*l.*

Your correspondent "M." says that he could name a line where enginemen's wages were reduced before the North Midland reduction, and that not the slightest inconvenience of any sort resulted from it. The line he refers to is, I dare say, the York and North Midland; and I can assure him that many a hair-breadth escape has occurred on that line. I can give day and date to many of them, and I shall bring them forward when I treat of the locomotive management of that railway. The reductions upon the North Midland were carried out under the official directions of Mr. Cabrey, the Locomotive Superintendent of the York and North Midland, and, in my opinion, what he directed to be done on the latter line reflects little honour upon him. The fact appears to me to be, that in Railway Directions, and in the appointment of Superintendents, qualifications are estimated by the extent of salary their friends can get for them. To say that 800*l.* or 1,000*l.* should be given to a superintendent is quite ridiculous. What are their duties that they require such pay? I think I know the extent of them, and I am sure superintendents would be sufficiently compensated for all they have to do with 300*l.*; and inferior superintendents should not have more than 150*l.*

Your correspondent "M." says that enginemen should be contented with a reduction until times improve. Why not apply the same rule to Superintendents? While enginemen are reduced, these personages are raised, although they have no superior claim in point of birth, education, or general merit. Mr. M'Connell was a common fitter; Mr. Cabrey was a stationary engineman at a colliery; Mr. T. Kirtley, on the North Midland, was bred a shoemaker; Mr. M. Kirtley, on the Birmingham and Derby, was bred a tailor. This, of course, is no disgrace to them; but I mention it to show that the drivers are, in this respect, their equals, even should the latter be, as "M." says, mere labourers.

In conclusion, I would beg leave to recommend to Directors and Superintendents not to blame individuals on suspicion of giving me information, for frequently the complaint is unfounded. I know one man who was blamed for giving information who knew nothing at all about the letter, and even did not hear of it until upwards of a week after it appeared. The Directors of the North Midland fell into a very great mistake, and did a grievous wrong, when they accused and discharged two individuals as being the authors of my letters, while, at the same time, these parties knew nothing at all about them until they made their appearance, neither was I acquainted with them, nor do I know them yet. I never received any information from them, either directly or indirectly, and I was extremely sorry to hear of their dismissal, of which it seems I was the innocent cause.

## LETTER XII.

Birmingham, July 25, 1843.

THREE remarkable occurrences have taken place since the date of my last, and which have compelled me to postpone the discussion of locomotive matters for another week.

The first I shall refer to is that to which you adverted in your notices to correspondents last week, regarding Mr. M'Connell of the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway. You appear to doubt the correctness of your information that Mr. M'Connell had expressed his determination to "sack" every man under him who should give any information to your paper. You certainly are a great terror to this gentleman, for he has commenced to do that which your correspondent attributed to him by anticipation.

On Saturday evening last he discharged a driver, than whom a more experienced and well-behaved man is not to be found on any railway. I have reason to believe that the cause of his dismissal was that he was supposed to have given me information regarding the "improved brake," noticed in my letter of the 5th instant, which Mr. M'Connell said he had successfully applied to the driving wheels of the engine. The injury Mr. M'Connell has done this man is very great, and I here publicly declare that he gave me no such information—in fact, I required none from him or any one else. When I read in your journal the paper that was laid before the Institution of Civil Engineers, my attention was forcibly called to the conduct of Mr. M'Connell in bringing himself forward to the public in such a manner. I was also surprised that a gentleman possessed of so much scientific information as Mr. Bishop could think of introducing Mr. M'Connell's name into his paper as the "inventor;" but what astonished me still more was to observe that it had been communicated by Captain W. S. Moorsom, C. E., a gentleman possessed of very great experience in locomotive management, and who has paid much attention to locomotive engines, and yet he could overlook the piracy. The first two engines that were introduced on the Bolton Railway by Messrs. Sharp and Roberts of Manchester, had brakes of a similar description, and these brakes were abandoned for the cause I before stated. I could cite many more instances of this fact were it necessary; and yet Mr. M'Connell had the presumption to have himself brought forward as the sole "inventor!" And then to discharge a faithful servant of the Company because he imagined that that party had given me information that would have a tendency to lower Mr. M'Connell's pretensions! Ridiculous! As well might he have accused the man because I had taken notice of the Coffin tunnel and the rickety state of the two bridges which are open to the gaze of the public.

And here I am glad I can say that men are now employed in finishing the tunnel in a proper manner, so that no further danger is likely to arise from it. I shall be happy to see the same attention paid to the bridges.



If Mr. M'Connell be determined to follow out his present career, I would beg leave to remind him that tyranny always meets with its just reward. Buonaparte, in the meridian of his glory, flattered himself that he had dethroned more kings, and created more new ones, than any previous emperor, but his ambition got the better of his prudence, and he fell! In like manner (to compare little men with great) Mr. M'Connell, in the plenitude of his power, may fancy that he can dislodge and create more engine-drivers, with the assistance of females, than any previous superintendent, but in the doing of this he also may fall, and, like a great personage, "never to rise again." Mr. M'Connell reminds me of Shakespear's Malvolio—

"Some are born great; some achieve greatness; and some have greatness thrust upon them."

His greatness having been *thrust* upon him, he appears not to have wisdom to manage it. You, Sir, have repeatedly stated that your columns are open to both sides of any question. If I have said anything wrong against him why does he not come forward and refute it. On the other hand, if I have stated nothing but the truth, and those truths have a tendency to lower his dignity, why does he not mend his manners, and I shall be among the first to come forward to applaud. It is foolish to wreak his revenge upon innocent and unoffending servants. Such a course of conduct can ultimately do him no good, and cannot affect my exposures in the smallest degree.

With respect to the Committee of Inquiry on this line, I cannot but take the liberty of differing with you on one point. *You say you quite agree with the Committee that these superior officers are not overpaid, and therefore you would regret to see them reduced.* For the duty they have to perform they *are* overpaid. I know well to what extent their duty is; and, besides, there are too many of them. Is it not shameful to see those *gentlemen* straining every nerve not only in the reduction of their inferiors' wages, but at the same time decreasing their numbers, thereby lessening their own labour; and while they are inculcating contentment on the labourers under reduction, they are drawing on the beggared finances of the Company for greater pay to themselves! The fact is, there is barely sufficient labour for a person of ordinary qualification to perform in the departments of Mr. Wetherall and of Mr. M'Connell together, and such properly qualified person would be well remunerated with the pay that Mr. M'Connell alone receives at present.

Of the second circumstance to which I have already alluded, you appear to have got some information, but in this your informant has been rather in a mistake. The occurrence (I mean the collision on the Gloucester line) was nearly attended with more disastrous consequences than any I have ever yet brought forward, and under very peculiar circumstances. Tewkesbury races were held last week, and the consequence was that a great influx of passengers was expected from Gloucester to that place, on the Wednesday. Mr. Wetherall, General Superintendent of the line, and Mr. M'Connell, had repaired to Gloucester to superintend the departure of the trains, and a pretty superintendence they made of it! A special train was required, and there

being a deficiency of enginemen, Mr. M'Connell and Superintendent Crawford, at Gloucester, took charge of the engine, and I believe Mr. Wetherall likewise accompanied them on the foot plate. Off they went with the train, but on arriving at Tewkesbury station, the engine, *Lifford*, No. 30, got the better of the drivers. Before proceeding further it will be necessary to let you understand the position of this station. At the top end of it there is a gateway, and beyond this a line of rails, which crosses the public street, and leads down to the river Severn. It was originally intended that the engines should cross this street, but it could not be maintained in the Act of Parliament. There was some scaffolding erected inside the gateway, which would not admit of an engine to pass under it, but on this occasion the engine proceeded at full speed through the gateway, and the scaffolding catching the chimney, down it came, bursting the gateway, and the engine getting into the street, a pig that was passing at the time was run over and killed on the spot. The engine and train kept bending their way to the Severn, and had it not been from chance, rather than efficient driver-ship, those *most perfect of enginemen*, and their superior officer, would have had a cooling dip in the river! You may easily picture to yourself the state of the trembling passengers who were thus about to find their way into the Severn instead of to the race-course. To sum up the occurrence, would you believe that orders were immediately issued by these three *gentlemen* to all the servants who witnessed the occurrence not to say a word about it, and to insure the fulfilment of the orders, threats were very fully held out. Do these superintendents imagine that if they have the power to gag the mouths of their humbled inferiors, they can do so with a whole train of passengers, the inhabitants of the locality in which the mishap took place, and, above all, the owner of the *pig*? I heard of the catastrophe from a quarter unconnected with the Gloucester Railway in any shape whatever. Because the two engine-drivers on that occasion were locomotive superintendents they will escape dismissal; but if any two enginemen on the line had fallen into the same blunder, every one of these superintendents would have joined in the cry, "discharge! discharge them!!" and they would not only have been discharged, but in all probability would have got a few weeks at the treadmill! How will they make the expense of this disaster appear in the ledger? The repair of the engine must appear, as also the damage done to the station, and the price of the pig, for which the proprietor demands 3*l.* 10*s.* Perhaps Mr. M'Connell will, out of consideration for the proprietors, defray the expense from the 150*l.* he so lately received for his good actions! If he does not, the cost would have furnished the Company with the services of a competent driver for a whole year.

I shall now treat of the third occurrence of which also you have had previous intelligence—(I am glad that you have locomotive correspondents besides myself)—I refer to the collision that took place on the North Midland Railway on Tuesday, the 11th instant. Before proceeding to relate the circumstance, I think it necessary to refer back to your journal of the 25th March, where will be found a letter of mine, dated the 21st of the same month, in which I then predicted that if the greatest

care and precaution were not used at the north end of Clay Cross tunnel accidents of a serious nature would take place, for at that time the Directors had reduced the number of watchmen one-half at that dangerous place. The prediction was verified on Tuesday, the 11th instant. A special train was required from Derby to Leeds, at 9.40 A.M. The engine was No. 30. On reaching the north end of Clay Cross tunnel there was an engine employed shifting a coal train, and no signal being given to the passenger train previous to entering the tunnel or on leaving it, the engine, coming out at full speed, pitched right into the coal train, rendering the engine useless, and smashing a number of the waggons, several to such an extent as to render it impossible to repair them. The passengers were of course in a state of great terror, but, wonderful to say, nothing of a serious nature occurred to them except the fright, the engine and tender protecting the train. Had the coal train pitched into the carriage train it is likely that scarcely a passenger would have been saved. It is sixteen weeks, or thereby, since only one watchman was employed instead of two. The amount of saving will, therefore, be from 12l. to 13l., while the damage done through this "saving" will be upwards of 300l. ! This is one of Mr. Cabrey's recommendations. If life had been lost, the old song would have been revived, that the Directors were sorry for the occurrence, and the men that had caused it were discharged. This is the consolation to bereaved relatives! Nothing must be hinted as to imprudent reductions. What will Mr. Hudson have to say to this at the next general meeting? Perhaps something, as in his last speech: that I have exaggerated—that a few coal waggons and the repairing of a shattered engine will only cost the Company a few pounds, and with Mr. Cabrey at his back to add, "*not quite so much as that!*" You will observe that my forebodings have been realised in every particular consequent on the imprudent changes both on the North Midland and Birmingham and Gloucester lines. That more life has not been sacrificed cannot be attributed to judicious management, and when so many hairbreadth escapes have of late taken place, it surely does not require the actual loss of life on every collision to convince the Board of Trade that the public are hurled along the railways in jeopardy.

I cannot conclude without once more seriously calling the attention of superintendents to the concluding part of my last letter. I can assure Mr. M'Connell that several topics regarding his management came direct from private conversations of his own. And as a further proof of the difficulty they will find in stopping the sources of my information, I can inform Mr. Kirtley, Superintendent of the Derby, that he has employed one of his clerks to write a letter to your journal, with reference to some of my remarks on him. I dare say, Sir, your next paper will be a proof that I am correct, and I can only add that if Mr. Kirtley or any other superintendent *does* come forward, I shall be perfectly happy and prepared to meet him.

It was the opinion of a celebrated Scottish king that one man only could keep a secret, and for that reason a poor blacksmith lost his head. If locomotive management secrets were to be thus kept, there would be no need to discharge innocent engine-drivers, though I fear much blood would in consequence be shed on railways.

## LETTER XIII.

Birmingham, August 14, 1843.

IN my last letter I mentioned that Mr. Matthew Kirtley, Superintendent of the Birmingham and Derby Railway, had employed one of his clerks to write you a letter in contradiction of something I had advanced, and my information on this point, as on most others connected with Railway Management, turned out to be correct. When I read Mr. Kirtley's letter\* I certainly was not a little surprised, for it disclosed nothing, save that I had hurt his pride. He must not, however, blame me for the exposure; it was your correspondent "M." that called it forth. Although surprised, I, at the same time, had much cause to feel flattered, for his letter went to corroborate the fact, that except as to the tailoring business, all I had before stated was the *truth*, particularly that most glaring circumstance of the additional 100*l.* per annum to his salary, the effect of the change, at first, benefitting the proprietors to the amount of 2*½d.* per annum for every 100*l.* share, but now, not even *that*, for after a week's trial of the alteration, Mr. Kirtley was obliged to recall some of his discharged men, so that the proprietors are considerable losers; and, in addition to this loss, he has a draftsman engaged at 25*s.* per week. What he has to do with a draftsman I know not; if a draftsman be necessary, a superintendent could be found at a much less salary, and who would be possessed of other qualifications, *not* possessed by Mr. Kirtley.

As to the allegation that Mr. Kirtley had been originally a tailor, my informant may or may not be correct. I have seen him again, and he tells me that it was Mr. Kirtley himself that informed him when they were fellow-labourers at the Vulcan Foundry, that he had tried the tailor trade, but found it would not *suit* him. No doubt he committed an error in saying that he had been *bred* a tailor, for the word "*bred*" would infer that he had served seven years' apprenticeship; and for that matter he never was *bred* to anything, certainly not to be a fit superintendent of the Birmingham and Derby Railway! He recommends me to go to the county of Durham for the particulars of his infant history. With that I and the public have nothing to do; but as to his history from his commencement on railways, I am of opinion I can give *that* much better than any one in the county of Durham, and I will try; but

\* The following is the letter referred to above:—

SIR,—In yours of the 15th inst., "*Veritas Vincit*," writing on locomotive management, states that Mr. Kirtley of the Birmingham and Derby Railway was bred a tailor. I beg to state distinctly that such was not the case; such a business for me was never contemplated. I am not ashamed of my origin, and have no wish to conceal it. I was born in Tanfield, county of Durham, where "*V. V.*" can have full particulars. I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

M. KIRTLEY,  
Locomotive Superintendent Birmingham  
and Derby Junction Railway.

† Sic in MS.—[ED.]

first of all, I wish it to be clearly understood that I have, and can have, no personal feeling against Mr. Matthew Kirtley, whose pretensions I am desirous of analyzing, simply because he is a fair specimen of a class now getting somewhat numerous.

When Mr. Kirtley (he himself says he will not be ashamed of his origin) left the county of Durham, he went to the Vulcan Foundry as a labourer. At that time his eldest brother, William, was an engine-driver on the Warrington Branch Railway, and William sent for his brother Thomas, who is now on the North Midland, and made him his fireman. In a short time Thomas became an engine-driver, and he sent for his brother, Mr. Matthew, and made him his fireman. In a short time Matthew also became an engine-driver on the Warrington branch, and thence he went as a driver on the Leeds and Selby (from which he was discharged for a reason I shall hereafter refer to). He was then obliged to descend and take charge of a stationary engine at Kensal Green, London, after which he got charge of the temporary engine-shed at Watford, on the London and Birmingham, to clean and keep three ballast-engines. From this place he was similarly employed for some time at the Hampton station, under the Birmingham and Derby Company, and on the completion of the Derby station at Birmingham, he was removed to his present place.

The circumstances connected with his dismissal from the Leeds and Selby Railway afford another proof how the difference of situations alters men's minds. At that time there was a very steady engine-driver of the name of Robson, and being possessed of considerable abilities, he was raised to be a foreman in the shed. This gave offence to Mr. Matthew Kirtley, who said (his own words) "I shall never submit to be lorded over by one of my equals;" and the consequence was, that a "strike" was agreed upon, if Robson were to be continued their superior. The names of those that "struck" were Kirtley, Kirkup, and Hesketh; the other engineman, Isdale, would not join them. Mr. Kirtley and his then fireman went to all the other firemen, and begged of them not to take an engine, for they were determined to stand out until Robson should be "reduced" again. After this the three *strikers* deputed Isdale to wait upon Mr. Smith, Civil Engineer of the line, to say (I will give you the exact words of what passed) that Kirtley, Kirkup, and Hesketh, would strike if Robson were continued foreman. Mr. Smith answered, "Go and tell Kirtley, Kirkup, and Hesketh to go to \* \* \* \* if they choose." Mr. Smith immediately went and ordered their instant dismissal! Would Mr. Matthew Kirtley have the goodness to answer the three following questions:—

1st. What would he say of his present engine-drivers were they to send a notice to the Directors, that unless Mr. Kirtley were reduced again to the rank of engine-driver they would strike?

2nd. When it was found necessary to remove the turn-tables that impeded the waggon-way to the goods-lift, why did he bury so many thousands of bricks, and refuse to take an offer that was made him of from 15s. to 20s. per 1000, the purchaser to take them up and re-level at his own expense the ground, to Mr. Kirtley's entire satisfaction?

3rd. How many hours each day since he came to Birmingham does

he owe the Company for the use of a lad from the shed to assist Mrs. Kirtley's servant in her kitchen, and run her messages?

In consequence of Mr. Allport having identified himself with the management of Mr. Kirtley, I cannot but bring him also under review. In the first place, I must refer to the remark, "that if he were appointed goods' manager, he would double the traffic over that of Mr. Dixon." The presumption of Mr. A. is unbounded, but he is not fit to "hold a candle" to Mr. Dixon, who, for integrity, intelligence, and general good management, cannot be surpassed, and is seldom equalled. I will give you a specimen of Mr. Allport's system of proceeding:—About two years and a half ago, a fatal accident took place on the Derby line, by a passenger train coming in contact with a plate-layer's "lurry," proceeding in an opposite direction on the same line. By the collision the train was thrown off the line, and a third class carriage overturned, in which were two of the Company's servants; one was killed on the spot, the other was severely injured. He had a wife and family, and was confined for a great length of time. When he was able to get out, Mr. Birkenshaw very humanely procured him a job which he was able to accomplish, namely, to weigh the goods. When the late reductions took place, Mr. Allport and Mr. Kirtley removed this man up the line to attend some gates seven days in the week at 14*s.* a week. The man complained to these gentlemen that his wages were too low, and craved an advance; Mr. Allport replied that 10*s.* was too much for him, and told him to remain contented! Again, at Kingsbury station there was a clerk at 24*s.* per week, and a man to pump water for the engines at 21*s.* per week. At the reduction the waterman was discharged, and the duty of pumping the water was put upon the clerk, and at the same time his wages were reduced to 21*s.* per week. At the station that leads to Fazeley, the clerk there had 24*s.* per week. He was informed that his wages were to be reduced to 21*s.* He said he could not do his duty efficiently at that rate, and resigned. The duty has since been performed by a porter. The clerk at Kingsbury complained of his heavy work, and perhaps because he was once coachman to D. Ledsam, Esq., he was removed to the Fazeley station, and the Kingsbury became vacant. A respectable individual applied for it; Mr. Allport inquired what he would do the duty for? He said 30*s.* Mr. Allport told him he would not give more than 10*s.* per week, and *that* was quite enough for a man who was out of employment! No doubt these officials pique themselves on the "savings" they have effected, but for my own part I do not much admire the conduct of parties—"gentlemen" though they be—who can screw down their inferiors' wages below the starving point, and at the same time apply for an increase of their own.

I have just learned that Mr. Allport's "saving," at the Kingsbury station, is, in practice, little to the interest of the Company. One day last week a train arrived at that station, when the fireman, not having the least idea that there was no water in the cistern, turned the cock of the pipe so much that he broke it. The following train arrived and wanted water; of course they could not obtain it, whereupon the driver pulled his fire out, not being aware that he had sufficient steam to carry him to the station (only thirteen miles). He had no alternative but to

try his power, and fortunately, without fire, he reached the station in time. This, Sir, is the first-rate management of the Birmingham and Derby Company.

At Whitacre station, which is the point where the line leads to Hampton and Birmingham, and at which place, until last week, there was a watchman day and night to attend the points, part of the train has, during the day, to go off to Hampton, but during the night it is not so. Mr. Allport has paid off the night-watchman, directing the day-watchman to pin up the points. This may be very correct, so far as regards economy, but should any evil-disposed person connected with the village go to those points, take out the pins, and put them "half on," the whole train would be thrown off the line, with what probable results I need not say; or if the points were shifted "full on" in a dark or foggy night, the train would run on to Hampton instead of to Birmingham.

With respect to the turn-tables referred to in my letter, those namely which it was found necessary to remove and replace by larger tables in another place, under the direction of Mr. Kirtley, they are so situated that they must be removed again. A year's salary of Mr. Kirtley and Mr. Allport will not pay for this. I will not now trouble you by describing the position of these tables, knowing that, at this time, you are so much pressed for room, but I will refer to them hereafter.

Such a system of management certainly confers little honour on the Board of Directors. If Mr. Allport does not amend his mode of managing the goods' traffic, I shall, at the request of a most respectable shareholder (although it will make me deviate from my usual course), address a letter to you upon his general management since he came to Birmingham.

I beg you to understand that I have no vindictive or malignant feeling against any superintendent whatever. As individuals I know them not; it is only in the performance of their public duty that I interfere with them, and when they adopt measures that have a tendency to put the travelling public in jeopardy of their lives, while such a system is continued, I shall not fail, with your friendly aid, to expose and denounce them.

In your last number you slightly noticed an accident which occurred on the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway on Tuesday last. It was exactly similar to, and happened about the same place as, that which occurred on the 8th instant, with this difference, that instead of a third-class carriage being the last in the train, it most providentially was a goods' waggon. The concussion drove it off the line, and separated it from the train. Notwithstanding all this, Mr. M'Connell, it seems, is determined to employ more strangers. When such proceedings will be put an end to I know not; but it is high time they should.

I shall conclude with Mr. Cabrey and the Leeds and Selby Railway. This line was leased by the York and North Midland Directors about two years ago. There must be something wrong in Mr. Cabrey's management, for he has changed his foreman five or six times, and has had upon this short line above twenty inexperienced and strange drivers. Some of those drivers, when there have been heavy, loaded trains have had

recourse to the dangerous expedient of tying down both the safety valves. One of them had an accident with a valve, and he took it out and drove a wooden peg into the hole, and ran his engine in this manner for several days. When the North Midland Railway Board wanted men on its memorable change, Mr. Cabrey took away some of the Leeds and Selby men and replaced them by inexperienced fitters. One of these fitters, who was only an apprentice on the York and North Midland, was running a goods' train to Leeds consisting of nine waggons. The waggons broke loose shortly after leaving Selby, and he was not aware of it until he nearly got to Leeds, when he had to return again for his load. Mr. Hudson, in his celebrated speech, stated that the old hands that were on the North Midland had put oatmeal into the engines on that line to destroy them. At that very time, and now on the Leeds and Selby, each driver carries a bran bag, and those inexperienced men have used it so profusely, and have so neglected washing their engines out properly, that most of the fire-boxes are burned. Mr. Cabrey, when examining the cause, with his own hand took out a large lump of dirt "as big as his head," as he himself termed it, and said the men had burned the boxes by a profusion of meal or bran, and from not paying proper attention to the washing of the boilers. The principal blame of this must of course be attributed to the carelessness of the men immediately under himself, for nothing else could be expected from persons not accustomed to have the charge of an engine. From experience Mr. Cabrey finds that cheap drivers are not the most advantageous. What from accidents constantly occurring, the burning of fire-boxes, and the excessive waste of coke, he has been discharging some of his inexperienced hands, and putting experienced men on at an advance of from 1s. to 1s. 6d. per day; in fact, all the enginemen he retains on this line have had their wages raised to induce them to be more careful of their engines, and not so wasteful of the coke.

When I treat of the York and North Midland I shall enter more fully into particulars regarding the mistake Mr. Cabrey has fallen into by his injudicious reduction, and by inciting others to follow his example, before he had given his imprudent experiment a fair and proper trial. He was the first to introduce the reduction; he is now (and ought to be) the first to show the example of raising the wages to a just and equitable standard. I would impress upon all locomotive superintendents to consider the great expense and waste of additional coke caused by unpractised men, and the consequent destruction of property, putting aside the safety of the public, which hitherto seems to have been quite a secondary consideration.

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#### LETTER XIV.

Birmingham, September 5, 1843.

I SEE by your notices to correspondents that an attack has been aimed at me by a person calling himself "Justitia." I was perfectly prepared for the attack, for I know the party very well. When my last letter



appeared it gave rise to considerable consultation among certain persons, and the following propositions were submitted:—1st. It was proposed that a sum of money should be subscribed for the purpose of buying up my writing. 2nd. A stately man, reaching to nearly six feet, proposed that I should be watched some dark night and receive “a d——d good hiding.” 3rd. Another proposed that they should have a dinner and invite me to it, and then they would endeavour to elicit how much money I would accept not to write any more upon locomotive management. 4th, and not the least, a dapper little man of plates and rails stepped forward, and said he, with one letter, would crush me into the lowest caverns of the earth. This proposition was hailed with three times three and another bumper. Thus, Sir, I anticipated the attack; and then, of course, I endeavoured to learn who this man of rails could be, who was so bold, and I was not long in tracing him out. Do, Sir, let him have his fling; I am perfectly prepared for him: but I rather think that the Directors of the Birmingham and Derby Railway would be quite as well pleased that he should put all his energies into action in looking after their permanent way, instead of entering into a controversy with me, either on public or private grounds, in which he would have but small chance of success. If he be determined to enter into personal attack, I have not the least objection; but it will be necessary to involve several respectable individuals, for whom you, as well as myself, have a high respect, and upon the friendship of some of those individuals the present, and, no doubt, the future, bread of my assailant depends: so let him have a care. To convince the public, and this pompous little gentleman, that I am not in the least intimidated, I shall, with your kind permission, proceed in my usual course; but before doing so, I beg leave to say, that nothing could possibly afford me greater pleasure than to see any gentleman come forward and show that what I have already advanced, and may further advance, is not founded on fact. If he can do so, I shall at once publicly atone for my error; but, till that is done, I hold that I have hitherto adhered to the TRUTH. In personal attacks the public can have no interest; nor would any charge made against me, whether true or false, have the effect of overturning my statements. \* \* \* \* \*

It will be remembered, that when the half-yearly meeting of the York and North Midland Company was held at York, on the 13th of February last, you then justly observed, that it was more like a meeting of the proprietors of the North Midland Railway held at York than anything else. In Mr. Hudson's ever-memorable speech, when he referred to the imprudent changes on the North Midland, he averred that the damage done to the engines during the first six weeks of the change did not exceed 200*l.* Mr. Cabrey responded, “considerably under that.” In my letter, dated the 21st of February, which appeared in the supplement of your journal, dated the 18th March, I took the liberty of contradicting those gentlemen; and upon referring to the last half-yearly accounts of the North Midland, I find that the repairs of the engines amounted in twenty-six weeks to 3,626*l.* 3*s.* 3*d.*, which evidently proves that I was justified in stating that Messrs. Hudson and Cabrey were in error in declaring that the first six weeks' repairs would be considerably under 200*l.* At the last half-yearly meeting of the North

Midland Company, the Chairman stated that there was a considerable deficiency in the traffic as compared with that of the corresponding half-year, and this deficiency I attribute to the want of confidence on the part of the public when the change became generally known. The deficiency I make out, by comparing the corresponding half-year, is 5,285*l.* 12*s.* 6½*d.* The Chairman said, "there was, however, a most ample set off to any diminution which might have arisen on that score, in the large, he might say the immense, reductions which had during that period been effected, amounting, he believed, to no less a sum than 11,430*l.*" I shall endeavour to analyse this saving, but before doing so I think it will not be uninteresting to railway proprietors generally, and perhaps to many Directors, to give you a slight estimate of the cost of the repairs of an engine which has been burned by the incompetence of the engineman. Many such have been seen on the North Midland, and are in that state at this moment, as a visit to the repairing shed will prove. As I pointed out in my last, the Leeds and Selby line is another striking proof to what extent the destruction of railway property may be created by the visionary notions of Locomotive Superintendents, and the reckless manner in which new appointments have of late been made. Theory and practice are very different.

#### ESTIMATES FOR THE REPAIR OF A BURNT ENGINE.

|  |           |           |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Taking the engine into the shed and stripping it—          |           |           |
| 3 days of a fitter at 5 <i>s.</i>                          | - - -     | £0 15 0   |
| 3 days of a labourer at 3 <i>s.</i>                        | - - -     | 0 9 0     |
|  |           | 1 4 0     |
| Patting in a new fire-box—                                 |           |           |
| 3 days each of two fitters at 5 <i>s.</i>                  | - - -     | £1 10 0   |
| 3 days of a labourer at 3 <i>s.</i>                        | - - -     | 0 9 0     |
|  |           | 1 19 0    |
| A new copper fire-box - - - - -                            |           |           |
|  |           | 112 0 0   |
| Drilling and staying ditto—                                |           |           |
| 12 days each of two men at 5 <i>s.</i>                     | - - -     | £6 0 0    |
| 12 days of a labourer at 3 <i>s.</i>                       | - - -     | 1 16 0    |
|  |           | 7 16 0    |
| New tubes (say on the average) 90 at 21 <i>s.</i>          |           |           |
|  |           | 94 10 0   |
| 180 ferrules at 1 <i>s.</i>                                |           |           |
|  |           | 9 0 0     |
| Labour taking out the old and putting in the new—          |           |           |
| 6 days of a fitter at 5 <i>s.</i>                          | - - -     | £1 10 0   |
| 6 days of a labourer at 3 <i>s.</i>                        | - - -     | 0 18 0    |
|  |           | 2 8 0     |
| General repairs of working gear, &c.—                      |           |           |
| 21 days each of two fitters at 5 <i>s.</i>                 | - - -     | £10 10 0  |
| Say 3 days for an occasional labourer at 3 <i>s.</i>       | - - -     | 0 9 0     |
|  |           | 10 19 0   |
| Raising steam and clearing out the boiler—                 |           |           |
| 2 days each of two men at 3 <i>s.</i>                      | - - -     | £0 6 0    |
| Coke for two days (take at a low average)                  |           |           |
| 8 cwt. at 1 <i>s.</i> 3 <i>d.</i>                          | - - -     | 0 10 0    |
|  |           | 0 16 0    |
| Running the engine on the line for trial two days—         |           |           |
| 2 days of an engineman (at reduced rate) 6 <i>s.</i>       | - - -     | £0 12 0   |
| 2 days of a fireman (reduced rate) 3 <i>s.</i> 9 <i>d.</i> | - - -     | 0 7 6     |
| 22 days coke at 1 <i>s.</i> 3 <i>d.</i>                    | - - -     | 1 7 6     |
|  |           | 2 7 0     |
| Total  | - - - - - | £242 19 0 |

Many other items could be added, but I consider the above quite sufficient to give proprietors an idea to what extent their property may be sacrificed to please the caprice of an upstart Superintendent, and in consequence of an injudicious selection of enginemem.

As to the *prodigious!* saving in reductions, let us see how it can become available to the shareholders, viz. 11,430l.

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Deficiency of traffic occasioned by want of public confidence  | £5,285 12 6½  |
| There are nearly 70 engines on this line, most of them sadly out of repair; I shall be far under the mark if I only take 10 of them to require new fire-boxes, &c. This agreeably to the foregoing estimate will amount to | 2,429 10 0    |
| The repairs which the other engines require will be underrated at  | 600 0 0       |
| 9 extra fitters required during the last six months, not required under the old hands, equal to 1,638 days, at 5s.   | 409 10 0      |
| A first-class carriage rendered useless at the fatal accident  | 500 0 0       |
| Repairing other carriages, new waggons, repairs of broken ones, &c. &c.  | 600 0 0       |
| A week's wages to each of the old hands from having been paid off without legal notice   | 63 18 0       |
| Voted to the Committee for their laudable exertions  | 600 0 0       |
| Ditto to Sheffield Committee   | 100 0 0       |
|  | <hr/>         |
|  | £10,588 10 6½ |
| Total "saving"   | £841 9 5½     |
| From this balance deduct the excessive waste of coke occasioned by inexperienced engine-drivers  | £             |
| The travelling expenses of Messrs. Marshall and Cabrey all over the kingdom in search of new drivers   | £             |
| Mr. Cabrey's pay for his "extraordinary exertions"   | £             |
|  | <hr/>         |
| Total  | £             |

Were these last named items deducted from the above balance, I fear there would be a very small sum remaining for the shareholders. The engines at the time of the reductions were (as has often been stated) in the best possible state of repair, and they ought to have been put in the same state previous to the 30th June, then a balance as small at least as the above would have appeared in the half-yearly accounts. I am confident that I am under the mark as to the repairs in everything I have stated, but if I am in error I shall now, as always, be glad to be set right.

Before I leave the North Midland I have one word of advice to give to Mr. Thomas Kirtley, Locomotive Superintendent, that is, to read over my letter (so far as it regards Mr. M'Connell), which appeared in your paper of the 29th ultimo, and also your Editorial remarks the following week on the same gentleman. I beg leave to inform Mr. T. K. that if he attempts again to do that which he attempted a few days ago, I shall most certainly have something to say to him. I also beg most positively to assure him, that I am not acquainted with, nor known to,

any one connected with his line, nor to my knowledge am I acquainted with any one who is.

I shall now, for the first time, refer to the York and North Midland Railway. That line has often been held up as a paragon of excellence, as regards the safety of the public and economy to the pockets of the shareholders. In my opinion, the locomotive management has no claim to the one or the other. It has also often been maintained that not the slightest danger or obstruction of any kind has ever taken place upon this line. Let us see how the following few facts will bear out such an assertion :—

On the 31st December last, at the junction with the Leeds and Selby and York lines, there was a boy (for economy) put on to watch the points. When the mail train was coming from Leeds, the boy held up a white light instead of a red, but fortunately the engineman got a glimpse of the engine coming in the other direction, and was just enabled to stop his train within two yards of the other train coming at full speed. There were only three carriages attached, otherwise they could not have escaped without a dreadful collision. The engineman and both guards declared that they never witnessed so miraculous an escape ; the twentieth part of a second and all would have been over.

About the same time there was another boy in charge of the points at the junction turning off the York line leading to the branch of the North Midland. The weather being foggy, one train was passing across to the branch line, and they had just got across when the other train came up at a tremendous speed. The trains were scarce clear of one another, and the engineman exclaimed, "that was a narrow escape—we shall have a flare-up some day from these boys."

At the Selby depot an inexperienced man of the name of Taylor, a gardener by trade, and who had only been a fireman about two months, got charge of an engine. He stepped on his engine, put the steam on, and then leaped off to turn the points. The engine kept going on, but fortunately it was into the shed. Getting there she went smash amongst the engines, broke a tender, and turned the water tank off. Had she been going the other way she would have caused great damage, if not sacrifice of life, for the regulator was quite open and the boiler full of steam.

In February last Mr. Cabrey's nephew, named Rutter, a fitter, was put on an engine to take Mr. Hudson "special" to Leeds or Normanton. On reaching Castleford station, the porters were shifting a carriage from the siding, not being aware of anything special. However, the young driver came "slapping on" past the station at full speed, and the men could with difficulty get out of the way. I do not know if Mr. Hudson was aware of the impropriety of a special train running past a station without previous notice, but had those men been a little further on, fatal consequences would have occurred, and perhaps Mr. Hudson himself have lost his life.

In the month of June last a brother of the above, and also a fitter, was sent from Castleford station with an engine, to inform the guard of the York train not to wait for the Manchester train, in consequence of an accident in the summit tunnel. He overtook the train at Burton

Salmon station, and did not shut off his steam until within a few yards of the train, to the terror of the passengers, the greater part of them jumping out of the train upon the other line of rails. Had another train been passing every one of them would have been run over. However, the engine kept coming on until the train stopped, but her speed being lessened no other damage was done but that of jumbling the passengers that were in the train all together, and giving them an additional fright. All this passed over without any further notice having been taken of it beyond the engine-driver getting "a blowing up" from the station-master, who can bear testimony to the fact.

The above are only a few of the hairbreadth escapes that have occurred upon the York and North Midland line during the last six months; I could produce many more but it would be wasting your valuable space. From what I have related it need not be wondered at that Mr. Cabrey now sees the folly of his "economical" scheme, and is discharging incompetent drivers, and employing experienced men at additional wages, as prudence also directed him to do on the Leeds and Selby Railway. When such startling statements as the above are brought forward, what can be thought of men possessed of reason, who are constantly affirming that there is no danger in having an engine and train of passengers placed in the hands of young and wholly incompetent drivers?

I beg you will excuse me in drawing upon your indulgence so much, knowing that you are at present greatly pressed for room. By the contract for the permanent way on the Birmingham and Derby Railway (I have a copy of it), it is specially provided that the contractor shall immediately repair, upon his entering, and at his own expense, all the turntables connected with the rails, providing all materials, &c. &c. There are about a dozen tables at this station, which come under this contract, and they are generally out of repair, many of the plates being broken. When I paid a visit to them a few days ago, I was surprised to find some of Mr. Kirtley's fitters engaged in repairing them, instead of men who should have been employed by the contractor. Perhaps this may throw some light on the late chivalrous defence of Mr. Kirtley. It astonishes me that Colonel Blane, when he visits the station, does not see the bad state those tables are in, and that he does not take care that the repairs are done by the contractor, and not by the Company's servants. Mr. Kirtley must not accuse his servant girl of having given me the above information, as he unjustly did when he charged her with having given an intimation that a personal attack was to be made upon me, and declared that it was impossible I could have obtained the information unless the girl had taken the tale out of his house. Whom he will next accuse I know not; but he certainly is carrying the joke too far. These Superintendents have jumbled their heads many a time together to trace out my informants, but hitherto they have been baffled, and in all likelihood they will remain so.

I shall hereafter enter very minutely into the contract above referred to. Three considerable proprietors and myself are making arrangements to visit the permanent way of the Birmingham and Derby line. The locomotive interests are deeply connected with the state of the perma-

nent way, and there are very dangerous expedients resorted to on this line to bring grist to the mill of the contractor. Our arrangements will be such that neither manager, superintendent, nor contractor, can interfere. I saw Colonel Blane at the station the other day, and heard the remark he made as to the two gentlemen "absent without leave," and I can assure him that by more frequent visits he would find that what he had cause to complain of is of no uncommon occurrence.

There appears to be one consolation in prospect. The Marquis of Clanricarde has given notice in the House of Lords that next session he will move for a Select Committee of their Lordships to inquire into the propriety of placing the whole locomotive management of the kingdom under some public Board of Control. A far higher degree of safety would be guaranteed to the public, and great pecuniary benefit would result to the pockets of the shareholders, were such a measure carried out (but not absolute control), which, as I have in previous letters pointed out, could be effected at a very small expense to the country.

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#### LETTER XV.

Birmingham, September 19, 1843.

In the concluding part of my last letter, I noticed the gratifying prospect of having a Parliamentary Committee to inquire into the existing imperfect state of the railway locomotive management of this kingdom. I shall, for the present, content myself with cursorily alluding to the subject, leaving all details to a future letter, which I intend, with your kind permission, to devote entirely to that important subject. There is nothing in our Government Railway Inspectorship but a "name."

Previous to the opening of the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway, it was inspected by Sir Frederick Smith, General Pasley's predecessor (and those gentlemen have very opposite views on locomotive management). Sir Frederick, in the usual way, passed over the line in a special train with the Directors, and they arrived safe at their destination; but being in a close carriage, and running at the rate of from 30 to 35 miles an hour, it cannot be expected that Sir Frederick could have examined minutely the state of the permanent way, much less could he have seen the state of the dark Coffin tunnel, which was then in an unfinished state, and continued so until in my letters it was brought under the notice of the public, when the Directors ordered its completion, during which operation you reported that a passenger, by the falling of a loose brick, nearly lost his life.

Before the Birmingham and Derby Junction branch was opened, it was inspected by General Pasley, who passed over it in a similar manner, and reported that it was perfectly completed, and quite safe for the public, whereas there were about four miles of it only temporarily laid, and when the inspection was over, this length of rails had to be lifted, and the permanent rails were laid while passengers were dangerously conveyed along it. Does not this show that such an inspection is, to use a vulgar but expressive term, "all humbug?"

In my last I referred to the York and North Midland Railway, and Mr. Cabrey, of whom by the way, it is said that he has availed himself of the labour of other men's brains in reference to a so-called invention of his connected with the engine. I would recommend Mr. Cabrey, if he still feels inclined to carry out his recent "amendments," to take a run down to Hull, and call upon Mr. John Gray, Locomotive Superintendent of the Hull and Selby Railway, and examine the admirable state of repair the engines of that Company are in, the moderate quantity of coke consumed, the efficient staff of enginemen he has, the small amount of repair the engines require under such drivership, and above all, his general system of locomotive management. It may be equalled, but cannot be surpassed; and I hope when I have occasion to allude to that line again, which may be at no distant period, I shall see no reason to alter my favourable opinion of it. I beg to say that I am as totally unacquainted with Mr. Gray as I am with Mr. Cabrey.

With respect to the accident that took place on the North Midland Railway on the 2nd instant, and which you took notice of in your paper of the 9th, it was not surprising that the particulars could not be got at by your Derby correspondent. Well might the officials wish to have it kept a secret, for a more disgraceful and wanton piece of recklessness you never had occasion to put on record. The driver who occasioned it, previous to the North Midland change, was placed under Mr. Cabrey, both on the York and North Midland and Leeds and Selby. He was tried on both these lines as a driver, and when Mr. Cabrey last discharged him, he said he would never be a fit person to have charge of an engine. When the North Midland Management was nearly at a stand for want of men, Mr. Peter Clarke (his uncle) gave him an engine, and many a pound he has cost that Company. The character of the accident was this:—The mineral train comes upon the line a little beyond the north end of Clay Cross tunnel, and if the goods' train from Leeds arrive there at the same time, it must remain a full half-hour after the mineral train starts, in case of a break down and to prevent a collision. In this case the mineral train had started previous to the coming up of the goods'. The engineman was "signalled" to lessen his speed, and was to be informed that the mineral train had to stop at the Canal Coal Wharf, about a mile on this side of Normanton. The engineman, however, regardless of all signals, proceeded on and overtook the mineral train, the brakesman of which signalled him to lessen his speed, for they had to stop. Nevertheless, he kept back and came up three times, until at last the mineral train did stop as required, and the goods' train ran forward at the rate of fifteen miles an hour, "pitched" right into the mineral train, knocked six waggons filled with lime to pieces, damaged three coal waggons materially, and by the concussion carried away the chimney of his engine, unseated the cylinders, broke the cylinder covers, and otherwise seriously injured the working gear, &c. &c. This damage will be to the tune of upwards of 500*l.*, and I hesitate not to say, was occasioned wholly by the selection of an improper driver. The replacing of these waggons, repairing the broken ones, and making compensation for the goods destroyed, should be all debited to the locomotive department; but I have no doubt that this will be avoided.

I can only give you a hasty sketch of the two accidents that occurred at the Derby station here, the one on the 7th, the other on the 12th instant, because I shall have occasion to refer to the alterations made at that station, when I treat particularly on the permanent way. The first accident was occasioned by the imprudence of having only one brakeman, instead of two, upon that heavy incline (it is 1 in 40). Mr. Birkenshaw had two; but when Mr. Kirtley made reductions, in order to advance his own salary, this was one of them. The damage was great, and the alarm still greater.

The accident on the 12th was occasioned by still greater imprudence, which shows the total incompetency of Mr. Kirtley for his situation. The old brakeman was discharged, who had great experience on that incline, and if he had been appointed with another assistant, the second accident would not have occurred. Instead of that, a man was put on who never was a brakeman; and if the waggons overpowered a strong and an experienced man what was to be expected from a puny man, without any experience whatever? Nothing but destruction of property and sacrifice of life! I do not know what the shareholders will think of these economising Superintendents, but when I address you again I shall open their eyes a little further. I have surveyed the permanent way as far as Tamworth, but I have not time to describe it, and perhaps when I next address you, I shall have gone over the whole length of the line. I shall just make one remark, and that I mean for Colonel Blane, or any of the acting Directors, namely, to take a copy of the permanent way contract in his pocket, and walk for a couple of miles down the line, and then he may have some idea of what I intend to lay before the public with regard to the "improved management" of the Birmingham and Derby Junction Railway.

I have one very serious word of advice to give the engineman of the ballast engine, that is, not to run his train before him for a distance of seven miles, and a passenger train at his back. He knows it is against the Act of Parliament, and expressly forbidden by all Directors. If a fatal accident should occur under such circumstances, no excuse would be taken, although he had been commanded to do so by Mr. Joseph Peyton, the contractor. I shall revert to this.

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## LETTER XVI.

Birmingham, September 27, 1843.

WILL you allow me a brief space in your valuable columns to notice a letter which appeared in your last number from "Justitia," *alias* Mr. Joseph Peyton, contractor for the permanent way on the Birmingham and Derby Railway? \* That I am not wrong in attributing the effusion

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\* The following is the letter and the Editorial note appended to it at the time:—

SIR,—It is matter of no small surprise to many of your readers, as well as to myself, that you should still continue to pollute your pages with the brazen and malicious fabrications of your *indefatigable* correspondent "Veritas Vincit."

Referring to his last effusion on locomotive management, I observe he begins by



in question to this far-famed contractor, I have ample reason to know. 'Tis true the scrap of Latin which is introduced would seem to fix the authorship elsewhere—for Latin, I imagine, is a rare acquirement on

questioning the veracity of Mr. Hudson, in his statement respecting the engine repairs on the North Midland Railway, for the half-year ending December last, and sets forth that the repairing expenses have been inordinately great, proceeding on the assumption that the entire expenditure was incurred in consequence of the change of servants that had previously taken place on the line; whereas, to any one at all conversant with such matters, and taking into consideration the number of engines and the extent of duty performed by them, the amount of repairs must appear exceedingly moderate. His long detail and enumeration of burnt fire-boxes, &c., is a mere fable, the offspring of his own inventive imagination, for which there never was even the shadow of a foundation, and I am enabled to state, upon the very best authority, that not the slightest injury was done, either to fire-boxes, tubes, or any other part of the engines, by the new hands set to work them. The very excellent condition of the whole of the engines on this line at the present time, as well as the price which the shares now bring in the market, tell their own tale, and sufficiently belie all that he has said on the subject; and I can assure you and your worthy friend Mr. "Veritas Vincit," that the management of Mr. T. Kirtley on that line is such as to have called forth the unmixed approbation not only of the Directors, but of every one else that has had an opportunity of observing his proceedings; and by that gentleman the *fulmen brutum* of your correspondent is treated with the contempt which it deserves.

In so far as regards the rigmarole remarks of "V. V." respecting the York and North Midland and Leeds and Selby Railways, were it not for the malignant spirit that pervades the whole, they are more a subject for merriment than for censure, and the many hairbreadth escapes which he so feelingly recounts *that might have taken place, if, if—they had taken place*, are strongly calculated to impress Mr. "Veritas's" mind with a deep sense of the benevolence of an overruling Providence, whose interposition has prevented those very direful calamities, the escape from which would have been miraculous indeed had they been true.

So far from Mr. Cabrey changing his views on the subject of economical management, he is determined to follow out with unswerving fidelity the system which he has adopted, and which has hitherto proved so successful; and I can fearlessly state, looking to the superior condition of the engines, and the general management of the department, that his conduct altogether stands forth an example to the locomotive world.

The dastardly and uncalled-for attack made upon the highly respectable contractor upon the Birmingham and Derby line is too contemptible to merit one single observation; and I have every reason to believe that the manner in which the permanent way of that line has been maintained since the commencement of that gentleman's contract, is such as to challenge the strictest scrutiny, and on no line in England have the terms of the contract been more rigidly observed. The utter baseness of your correspondent's insinuations shows the *genuine complexion* of his own *immaculate mind!*

Whether the *orgies*, with so much pathos described by your correspondent on a former occasion, ever took place, I care not, nor shall I stop to inquire. Of one thing, however, I am very certain, that when he conjured up in his fertile imagination the call for "one bumper more," it must have been with the most poignant regret that he was not himself there to participate. If the proposition was made "to buy up his services," it must for the moment have been forgotten that no coinage of this realm is sufficiently minute to have paid the price, if estimated at their real worth. The only sensible proposal that seems to have been made on the occasion was that of "giving him a d——d good hiding," only the party making it had not at the time remembered that you cannot give a beating to a sweep without being polluted with his soot. I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

JUSTITIA.

Great Charles-street, Birmingham,  
September 18, 1843.

[We give the above as a specimen of elegant and gentlemanly letter-writing. "V. V." is quite able to take his own part, and therefore we shall not meddle in the

the Solyhill brickfield, where, up to a recent period, Mr. Joseph Peyton has been employed. Perhaps, however, the "*brutum fulmen*" was lugged in to show his learning by the young gentleman employed to pen the epistle—I mean Master Haydon (more famous for the outside garniture of his head than for its furniture within) who is employed at 25*s.* a week by Mr. Matthew Kirtley as a draftsman—a draftsman in a repairing shop! The letter of "*Justitia*" I shall regard, therefore, as that of Mr. Joseph Peyton, of 92, Bloomsbury, Birmingham, although Mr. "*Justitia*" affects a finer address, by dating from Great Charles-street. What a lack of talent, Sir, there must be in these quarters when Mr. Joseph Peyton is [he will see that I am equally *learned* as himself] the *facile princeps*—the Great Champion of Locomotive Management, as displayed in and around the ancient town of Derby!

"*Justitia*" commences by stating, that it is "no small surprise to many of your readers that you continue to pollute your pages with" my "brazen and malicious fabrications." I recommend "*Justitia*" to apply his own observations to himself. I challenge him, or any one else, to come forward and pick out from any one of my letters one fabrication, falsehood, wilful exaggeration, or ungentlemanly expression. Whether the same can with truth be said of the single letter of "*Justitia*," will be apparent hereafter.

In the second paragraph, he says, I begin by questioning the "veracity of Mr. Hudson respecting the repairs of the engines of the half-year ending the 30th December last." Let him look at my letter again, and he will find that I do not refer to that half-year at all. Again, he says that "my long detail of burnt fire-boxes, &c. is a mere fable." In reply, I refer him to Messrs. Shipland and Todd, of Leeds. Let him ask them how many fire-boxes and tubes they have put in, and how many they have at present on hand for the same purpose; and let him also inquire of Messrs. Kitson and Co. how many *they* have put in; and when he has done this, let him enter the repairing shed at Derby, and examine the engines there. Seeing will surely be believing. If further proof be required, let him ascertain how many new fire-boxes Mr. Hudson stated, at the half-yearly meeting, they had got put in, all burnt, as I contend, in consequence of improper drivers. Perhaps the following fact may still further enlighten him:—

On the 14th instant, Edward Hall, driver of No. 41 engine, on the North Midland Railway, burnt out every one of the tubes. This was overlooked, and he was next day provided with No. 2 engine, when the very same circumstance occurred again, whereupon it was then ordered that his wages should be paid, and he was desired to quit the ground immediately. This much for "*Justitia*'s" "very best authority," the last-named circumstance having occurred only three days previous to the date of his letter!

In the same paragraph "*Justitia*" asserts that the "locomotive

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matter further than to inform our readers that they may receive as entirely correct what "*Justitia*" says as to the permanent way of the Birmingham and Derby Railway, and the "HIGHLY RESPECTABLE CONTRACTOR," seeing that the "highly respectable contractor" is no other than "*Justitia*" himself! Modesty for ever!—*Ed.*]

management of Mr. T. Kirtley calls forth the unmixed approbation of the Directors." As "Justitia," no doubt, wishes that I should give a specimen or two of that gentleman's economical management, I shall do so, although, perhaps, Mr. T. K. may not thank his eulogist for it, and may blush to find that his "management" has attracted so much notice.

Is it consistent with good management to cut the lap from off the slide valves? Is it prudent to reduce the blast-pipes of the engines from four and a half inches to three inches, and then contend that an engine will run quite as well with a three-inch blast-pipe as with a four-inch?

Is it a wise and economical step to raise the tenders and make the axle-box grease-hole much larger, thereby consuming three times the quantity of grease that was consumed before?

All this, and much more, Mr. T. Kirtley has done!

Has he secured the "unmixed approbation" of the Directors, for making some whimsical and expensive alteration on one of the engines, which, after having been completed and tried, was thrown into the scrap heap? I should like to have a peep into the locomotive books of the North Midland. So much at present for Mr. T. K.

In the third paragraph, "Justitia" sneers at what he is pleased to style my "rigmarole remarks" upon the York and North Midland. The remarks may be "rigmarole," for I cannot lay claim to "Justitia's" logical and classical terseness, but they are quite *true*, and no sweeping declamation of "Justitia's" can get rid of the facts. Would Mr. Hudson authorise "Justitia" to deny that he, Mr. H., was not in the special carriage when the porters were nearly run over; or would the station-master at Castleford assert that no such occurrence took place as I related, or that he did not severely reprove the driver for it? I can assure "Justitia" that, whatever merriment he may make of the occurrence, it was no laughing matter to the passengers. I need not at present enter further into this paragraph, as I shall have occasion to return to the York and North Midland line, and Mr. Cabrey, very shortly.

In the fourth paragraph, "Justitia" affirms, that so far from Mr. Cabrey having changed his views on the subject of economical management on the Leeds and Selby, "he is determined to follow out with unwearied fidelity the system he has adopted." Does "Justitia" mean the system Mr. Cabrey has lately adopted, or his previous system? If he means the latter, the following will surely convince him that he knows nothing of the doings of Mr. C. on the Leeds and Selby line. Mr. Cabrey has, as I maintained before, discharged the men whom he had engaged at low wages, and who had burnt the fire-boxes, and he has raised the wages of those he retained, and the wages also of the new hands he put on. To convince "Justitia" that I am not ignorant of the fact, I will give the names of those discharged, retained, and newly put on. The discharged are, John Laverick, Robert Steel, John Addis, and Isaac Lillew. The retained, at 1s. per day advance, are, William Ballance, David Gibson, and William Scott. The new hands, at the advance of 1s., are, Matthew Hall, John Charlton, and

John Rutter. Mr. Cabrey, when he discharged John Laverick, threatened him with a prosecution, for tying down the spring balance, or safety valve of the engine, and running it in this reckless manner. I agree with "Justitia," that if Mr. Cabrey *does* continue his present "system," he will be a laudable example to the locomotive world, as well as conducive to the interest of the proprietors, and, above all, to the safety of the public.

"Justitia's" fifth paragraph is one of the most barefaced eulogiums upon himself, coupled with the most impudent "fabrications," ever written by man. "Justitia" asserts, "that on no line in England have the terms of the contract been more rigidly observed" than on the Birmingham and Derby Railway. I give this the most flat contradiction. For example, Mr. "Justitia" Peyton's contract specially provides, "that the quick fences are to be kept well weeded, all dead quicks to be renewed with good strong plants, and every possible means to be taken to rear the fence as rapidly as possible." Now, no part of this stipulation has been attended to during the summer. For miles it is impossible to see the quick fence for weeds of a very wild description, no dead plants have been replaced, and no means have been taken to rear the fence as rapidly as possible.

The contract further provides, that "the post-and-rail fences are to be kept in thorough order, so as to prevent the trespass of cattle from the adjoining lands," &c. If this has been attended to, why were there so many sheep killed by the engine a few weeks ago, by their getting on the line, from dilapidated fences?

The contract further states, that the "ditches by the side of the railway are to be kept at the proper depth, free from weeds and rubbish of any description." For miles upon a stretch you cannot even see the form of a ditch for weeds.

The contract also provides, that "the ballast shall be kept in the best state of repair, clean and clear from weeds, to replace all decayed sleepers, &c." So far from this having been done, I have pulled up weeds two feet long by the side of the rails; in fact, there are many places of the line more like the railway of an old forsaken colliery than anything else. Betwixt Whitacre and Tamworth much ballast is wanting—many decayed sleepers requiring to be replaced. I should like to know what has become of the Company's Permanent-way Inspector, Mr. Sewell. Shortly after Mr. Peyton entered upon his contract, Mr. Sewell found much fault, so much so that they got to high words, but some mesmerism having come over him, he is now quiet. Some say he wears the contractor's gloves, others say that the festive boards of the "Swan" at Wheatstone, or the "Dog" at Whatmorton, could tell a tale. I have a few particulars regarding a certain *conclave* who agree to keep all secret.

"Justitia's" concluding paragraph requires no comment. I still adhere to the fact of the existence of the jovial meeting I described in your paper of the 2nd instant, with this further remark, that the "d—d good hiding" is still on the tapis. I have no doubt they consider this the cheapest plan of attempting to silence me. Let them try; I am not afraid.

Will "Justitia" inform you whether the following is a "fabrication?" On Friday evening last a train of goods' waggons, 19 in number, came down the incline, at a tremendous rate, against the two buffer-posts that were set up to prevent them paying another visit into the refreshment room. The concussion drove the posts on for about two feet. The new brakeman, who came from Derby, declared that when the train got the lead of him on the incline he expected to lose his life, and said that the work was by far too hazardous for one man. After such repeated warnings, if life should be sacrificed on this incline, on whom would the blame rest? It *must* rest SOMEWHERE.

In conclusion, I have one very quiet word to say to Mr. William Johnstone, Locomotive Superintendent at the Birmingham station, and his "night superintendent," as he pleases to call himself. It is this, that in their leisure (of which, by the way, they have no lack) they will be good enough to refrain from uncalled-for observations on me and my business. I am quite ready to discuss *their* pretensions, but they would do well not to force the task upon me. They might employ their time much more usefully by taking a walk down to the locomotive establishment of the Grand Junction Railway, at Vauxhall, and inspecting what Mr. Parker, the Locomotive Superintendent, has done and is doing. They will see much to admire and more to imitate. They will see Mr. Parker pay the most rigid attention to his duty, for which he is so well qualified, and perhaps they may be induced to "go and do likewise."

I have to apologise for taking up so much room with these remarks: but it seems desirable that the class, of which Mr. "Justitia" is the head, should not be allowed to put forth "fabrications" and insinuations without being promptly and fully exposed.

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## LETTER XVII.

Birmingham, October 11, 1843.

AGREEABLY to your recommendation appended to "Justitia's" letter of last week,\* it is not my intention to waste my time and your columns

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\* The following is the letter, and the Editorial note appended to it, at the time:—

SIR,—I perceive from the communication of that notable champion of *the public safety*, "Veritas Vincit," which appears in your last publication, that he has felt a little warm on the subject of the few remarks I addressed to you on a former occasion, and in the midst of his heat, his imagination has again become somewhat exuberant, while the reckless manner in which he parades before the public the names of parties not at all concerned in the matter, betrays his usual disregard of truth.

I have no objection to leave him in undisturbed possession of his so much vaunted classical lore, on which he appears to plume himself, and sincerely hope that in translating from the dead languages, he gives a truer interpretation of the author's meaning than his ordinary lucubrations do, of his adopted signature, for if he expects to conquer, truth seems not to be the weapon he is disposed to wield. He is rather unfortunate in the sources whence he derives his intelligence; for had he been a little more particular in informing himself as to the accuracy of the assertions he so boldly makes, he must necessarily have been aware that they still remain *baseless*, and equally *base* as before.

by answering at length "Justitia's" statements, or rather "mis-statements"; but as my veracity has been so barefacedly impeached, perhaps you will permit me to follow up my former remarks with further decisive

To all who are acquainted with the practical working of a locomotive engine, it is well known that those parts much exposed to the intense action of the fire are, under the very best management, liable to be worn out, and, as a matter of course, require to be renewed; and I here reiterate, without fear of contradiction, that neither fire-boxes nor tubes on the North Midland, York and North Midland, or Birmingham and Derby Railways, have been injured through unskilfulness or carelessness on the part of the servants on those lines.

The attempt made to injure the character of poor Hall, an industrious, well-disposed, working man, is characteristic of him that makes it, and will meet with the reprobation of every rightly constituted mind. His statement as to the burning of the WHOLE of the tubes, in two of the engines on the North Midland, bears its own refutation along with it, from the utter impossibility of such a thing ever taking place.

His statement of Mr. Kirtley having taken off a small portion of lap, to some extent, is certainly true, this being for a certain description of work, in many cases, absolutely necessary, and is practised by the most intelligent engineers. With respect to contracting the blast-pipes, unfortunately for your correspondent's veracity in this instance, no such thing was done.

I beg to inform "Veritas Vincit," that the expense of renewing tender-axles and brasses is likely to be much more considerable than any extra quantity of grease used to prevent their destruction by over heating. This is a fact well ascertained by experience. Mr. T. Kirtley is, nevertheless, much indebted to your correspondent for his useful and friendly counsel, and begs to assure him, that his expensive and whimsical alteration on one of the engines to which he alludes, instead of being thrown into the scrap heap, has proved completely successful.

In reply to Mr. "Veritas's" inquiry respecting Mr. Cabrey's *systems*, permit me to assure him, whatever he may have been informed to the contrary, that that gentleman has all along had but *one system*, by which he is still determined to abide, and that the statement respecting the advance of wages to old and new hands, must have been a day-dream of "Veritas Vincit's" own fancy, no increase of wages having taken place, unless for extra work.

The perilous situation of Mr. Hudson in a special carriage, as narrated by your correspondent, was quite unknown to himself, nothing of the kind having occurred to give the slightest alarm to him or any other passenger. Another of "Veritas Vincit's" *might-have-been's*!

Whatever "Veritas Vincit" may say, as to the self-eulogiums of the contractor on the Birmingham and Derby Railway, will not have the least effect upon that gentleman's equanimity, or prevent him holding on the even tenor of his way, undisturbed by the malignant strictures so wantonly applied to him, and which he regards with supreme contempt. When your correspondent made his survey, as he terms it, of that line, I am of opinion that his vision had not been entirely cleared from the cloudiness produced, "*hesterno Baccho*," as he has evidently been looking for ditches where none ever existed, and fortunately for himself they did not, otherwise he might have become an occupant. In pulling weeds two feet long, as he describes, he has undoubtedly been upon the wrong side of the hedge, and he may congratulate himself, that in committing a trespass he was not caught by the owner, who, in this case, might have anticipated for him what he says still remains on the tapis in another quarter. The condition of the works thus assailed, can be safely appealed to in refutation of all that he has said on the subject. I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

JUSTITIA.

Great Charles-street, Birmingham, October 2, 1843.

["Justitia" now "sings small," and we recommend "Veritas Vincit" to pursue his comments upon locomotive management without occupying *his* time or *our* space with any further special notice of Mr. Joseph Peyton, or his toadies or tools. While on this subject, we may state that we have received a letter, signed "A Birming-

proofs of the correctness of my allegations, in the course of which, should I have cause to bring more fully before the public any individual, that individual must blame the advocate he employed to denounce me, or if that advocate was not authorised so to do, on him must the blame rest.

With reference to the imperfect manner in which Mr. Joseph Peyton had, previously to my exposure, attended to the conditions of his permanent way contract, and the manner in which his superiors overlooked such conduct, I find, by walking down the line, that a great number of hands had been employed, commencing from Birmingham, clearing the quick fences, slopes, ditches, and rails from weeds, and by this clearing I saw in many places along the line blanks in the fence to the extent of from forty to fifty yards without a single plant, and innumerable blanks of 12 inches. I also witnessed, along with two friends, a rail joint (it is the thirteenth from Church-bridge crossing on the down line) in a most disgraceful state; it is split up at the joint in two places eight inches long, the rail pressed out to about four inches, and if one of those splits were to rise up, the engine would be thrown off the line, and in all likelihood the train cast over the embankment. I was informed, when on the line, that orders are given to proceed on to Whitacre with all possible dispatch. Thus, Sir, if I had not been correct in my former allegations, why are so many men now put on that part of the line which I pointed out? To show that my strictures are not undeserved I may mention, that in consequence of Mr. Peyton allowing the switches to get out of repair at the Birmingham station, the Blythe engine with the goods' train was thrown off the line this morning.

Before I take leave of the permanent way on the Birmingham and Derby line, I would beg to bring under the notice of Directors generally, one suggestion which, if carried out, would be of infinite benefit to the railway proprietary, namely, that no one individual should have a contract for the permanent way on any railway for above ten or twelve miles. For instance, on such lines as the London and Birmingham and Grand Junction, there would be sufficient work for ten respectable contractors. They would then vie with each other as to who should have his portion in the best state of repair. Such a plan would require fewer overlookers or Company's Inspectors, and the inspectors that might be employed would do their duty much more efficiently, for it would also do away with the monthly dinners given to those officials by the principal contractors. It cannot be expected that those expensive dinners are given without a corresponding indirect return, and, moreover, it would obviate the necessity of making allegations such as are insinuated by your correspondent "Subscriber," on Messrs. Locke and Brunel, in your paper of the 30th ultimo. There is another hint which I would offer, namely, that no permanent way contractor should have the extra work. This is fraught with the greatest evil to the proprietary. Thus,

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ham and Derby Shareholder," thanking "Veritas Vincit" for his exertions; and stating that, since his strictures appeared, a great number of men have been put upon the line to remove the weeds and repair the fences. Now, he says, plate-layers may be seen on the line. We are glad that Mr. Peyton has had sense enough to profit thus much.—Ed.]

when extra work is wanted, the contractor employed calls his whole force from the permanent way, to its great neglect, and while he is receiving an extra profit from this sort of work, he at the same time is pocketing the permanent way pay. There are many contractors who would undertake to do all the extra work of whatever nature or kind, as efficiently as the permanent way contractor, and at considerably less expense to the Company, and this I am perfectly prepared to prove.

With regard to my comments on Mr. Cabrey and the Leeds and Selby line, I repeat again that I was correct, with this difference, that the 1s. per day advance to good men was recommended by Mr. Hudson, which Mr. Cabrey carried out with but one exception. He retained a man whom he considered unworthy of the advance, and by persisting in this, the Company have become considerable losers, for this man ran a coal train against several empty waggons, and the concussion was so great, that the empty waggons were driven against a stone wall, which they broke down and caused considerable damage. It was allowed by those who witnessed the occurrence, that if the empty waggons had not been there, the engine and part of the train would speedily have been in the river Ouse. Thus, for the saving of a few shillings, damage was created to a greater amount than would have paid an efficient driver for a whole year.

In support of what I before advanced, that Mr. T. Kirtley had thrown his "improved motion" into the scrap heap, I appeal to Mr. Peter Clarke, who, when he heard of the circumstance, ordered two labourers to turn over the heap, and find the relics of the "invention," which they did. The engine was immediately refitted, but it works very imperfectly, and it is with difficulty that it can be kept together. As to Mr. T. Kirtley insisting that the cutting off the lap from the valves is done by the most eminent engineers, how is it that those altered engines are using from 20 to 25 per cent. more coke than they did formerly, and keeping very bad time? How is it that the long experience of the engineers of the Liverpool and Manchester, Grand Junction, Manchester and Leeds, and other great lines, give as much lap as they possibly can; or how is it that Mr. T. Kirtley has not got his younger brother, Mr. Matthew, to follow his example on the Birmingham and Derby?

While upon the North Midland I may as well refer to another grand "smash"—I hope you will excuse me if you think I am using the least levity, because from the frequent occurrence of these "smashes," Directors and officials seem to think that unless life be sacrificed passengers have no cause to be alarmed. You must know that this "smash" is kept a profound secret on the North Midland. Not one of the servants of the Company have "heard" anything at all about it (at least they are told to say so). Nevertheless, the facts are these:—On Friday evening last, Hulse, driver of No. 65 engine, left Derby with the goods' train for Leeds, and had only proceeded about a mile when the engine became so disabled that he could not go on with the train, and he was just able to return. On reaching Derby he was asked what was the matter; he said he did not know exactly—he had either lost a valve or a piston—a strange answer from an *experienced* driver (as Mr.



T. K. would call him). Upon examination, it was ascertained that one of the pistons had gone to pieces in consequence of not being properly fitted; for this engine had been running only a few days after having undergone a "thorough repair," under the direction of the Superintendent. Hulse was then provided with No. 63 engine. It is only a week or two since this engine was completely overhauled. On he proceeded with the train to about a mile on the other side of Heckton, when he found that the engine was disabled, and on examination, it turned out that he had dropped a valve pin. He immediately dispatched his fireman and brakesman back in search of the pin; these three men never giving it a thought that from the repeated delays they had made, the passenger train was "above due." However, back the two men went, without a signal with them, for nearly half a mile, and the passenger train coming up at full speed passed them, and not being aware of the obstruction pitched right into the goods' train, carrying away the buffer bar of the engine, and otherwise damaging it, breaking the waggons and several of the waggon axles, from the severity of the concussion. After what has been advanced on a former occasion, it would be ridiculous for me to say that when the passengers were all jumbled together in a darkish morning, and heard the wreck of waggons, it could afford them "merriment." I cannot for the present dismiss Mr. T. Kirtley without giving another proof that he is incapable of carrying out even a fanciful invention of his own. You will recollect that a few weeks ago you noticed a splendid turn-table that was in the course of being erected for the North Midland Railway at the Derby station, which table, when finished, realised the most sanguine expectations of the inventor. It is easily turned by one man, by means of the simple but powerful machinery attached. In consequence of the utility of this table, the Directors resolved that a similar one should be put down at Masborough station, turning both engine and tender at the same time, but Mr. T. K. held out that he could put down one of the same size at much less cost, and upon an improved principle. This was listened to by the Directors, and he was entrusted with the construction of the table. When it was finished and tried, however, it tumbled to pieces, and his improved machinery was like his "new motion," thrown into the scrap heap! He had no alternative but to fit up a table upon the old plan.

You must not be surprised, Sir, that I have another "smash" to bring before you. It occurred at the Gloucester station on the morning of Wednesday last, and was occasioned by the mismanagement of a driver of Mr. M'Connell's own making. The person referred to never was a fireman on any engine; he was a selected labourer put into the shed to clean the engines, and was allowed to shift them about in the shed. Mr. M'C. then made him a turner, and after a short time gave him an engine. The nature of the disaster was this:—On Wednesday morning last, the second mail train out of Birmingham, which reaches Gloucester at 5.40 A.M., on passing Cheltenham, where the line inclines 1 in 300, gained considerable speed and completely got the better of the driver, so much so, that on reaching the Gloucester station he could not stop it. There were two empty carriages on the station into which the

engine "pitched," turning the first over the top of the other on to the platform, and upsetting the watchman's hut. The other carriage broke down a part of the platform. This, of course, was another cause of "merriment" to the passengers. To talk of alarm or destruction of property is, it seems, absurd and slanderous!

On Thursday morning last, with the 3.14 A.M. mail train, the engine *Pivot* broke down, and was unable to proceed until the second mail train came up, when the engine of that train proceeded with both trains to Gloucester, the first train being one hour and a half behind time.

I shall revert to this line and notice the Lickey incline, the engines, improved water-tanks, the utter failure of Mr. M'C.'s heating apparatus, &c. &c., and the extraordinary staff of locomotive clerks at Bromsgrove, there being five clerks to seven engines!

After the publication of the foregoing Letter, the following from "JUSTITIA" appeared, with the Editorial note appended:—

SIR,—I see "the creature is at its dirty work again." On a former occasion, I stated that your correspondent "Veritas Vincit" was unfortunate in his sources of intelligence (of which, by the way, I know something more than he is aware of) and his very lengthened effusion in your last publication still tends to confirm the statement; for he not only fabricates the grossest assertions, but the slight facts on which he does occasionally build are so garbled and distorted as to have lost the faint semblance of truth they might have originally possessed.

It is not my intention to wade through his long-drawn details, rendered disgusting by their malignancy as well as their mendacity, and which only tend to show to what degradation a depraved mind will stoop in order to earn a paltry pittance, and that too from a set of dupes whose real interests he has done more to damage than any other man.

It is truly pitiable to see a man whose mechanical knowledge *barely* enables him to distinguish between a locomotive engine and a wheel-barrow set himself up to discuss the construction and arrangement of motions and laps of valves, and other matters, which merely serves to betray his own ignorance, and render ridiculous a respectable channel, by giving them insertion. Mr. Peter Clarke has not yet commenced the search for the discarded valve-motion of which "Veritas Vincit" speaks; but if Mr. "Veritas" will honour him with his company at Derby, he will be happy to join him in attempting its discovery, and having the aid of so clear-sighted an individual in exploring the mysteries of the scrap heap, he has no doubt of their united exertions proving successful.

"Veritas" says that none of the servants of the North Midland have heard anything at all about another "grand smash" on that line. It would be matter of surprise if they had, unless it were from the quarter whence so many "grand smashes" have emanated, viz., your correspondent's own bewildered cranium, where, it may safely be said, the wish is father to the thought. Fortunately no "grand smash" has recently taken place there. His attempts to give a colouring of truth by minute detail, are too transparent to deceive any one but himself, for it so happens that engines 63 and 65 have not been at work for upwards of four weeks, and there is not a driver of the name of Hulse\* upon the line. More barefaced, detestable, and utterly unfounded statements, were never laid before the public than the whole of his worthless narrations respecting the North Midland management; and I feel certain the gentlemen connected with that line, aware that the author and his character are not unknown to the public, feel very easy under his puny attacks.

Mr. Hudson, whose well-known character as a railway manager is based upon a foundation too broad to be at all affected by assaults so insignificant as those that from time to time appear in your journal, did not in the instance alluded to, or any

\* To prove the fallacy of this assertion, this engine-driver, Hulse, was discharged in the middle of November following.—V. V.

other, dictate to Mr. Cabrey respecting wages to engine-drivers, or any other servants in his department; and on reverting to past events, your correspondent will discover that the Great North of England Company took the lead in making reductions, and even now experienced and skilful drivers are working on that line at 4s. per day, and no difficulty is found in procuring the best of enginemen at that rate, and the time is not far distant when this, like every other description of labour, will find its true level.\*

\*The doleful tale of the train almost running into the river Ouse claims its own pater-nity, and takes rank along with many of its brethren of elder birth in the same quarter.

As a further specimen of your esteemed correspondent's unimpeachable veracity, as relates to the contractor on the Birmingham and Derby Railway and his proceedings, I would merely state that the whole from end to end is the vilest misrepresentation, and that instead of additional men having been put upon the works as he describes, Mr. Peyton has fewer hands in his employment at the present time than during any period since the month of February last, and the reason is, that the line is in a condition not to require them. Yours, &c.,

JUSTITIA.

Great Charles-street, Birmingham, October 16. 1843.

[We really ought to apologise to our readers for occupying our space with another epistle from Mr. Joseph Peyton, but we are anxious to show how that "highly respectable gentleman," as he calls himself, meets *facts* by brazen scurrillity and bold assertions. We must decline his further favours unless he can bring forward something more to the purpose. The idea of "Veritas Vincit" being *afraid* of such a mannikin is rather too good! We, however, must interfere; so we warn "Veritas Vincit" that it will be useless to prepare a castigation for this pompous little gentleman, as we cannot waste our space on him. "Veritas Vincit" should pursue his course, heedless of this "Great Charles-street," swaggerer and his compeers.—Ed.]

## LETTER XVIII.

Birmingham, 25th October, 1843.

At the conclusion of my last letter I promised to give you a description of Mr. M'Connell's expensive and futile improvements upon the two locomotive engines that are used on the Lickey incline, on the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway, and for which he got himself so praised in London. It would be no easy task to make even a rough estimate of the cost of his inventions, and particularly of his travelling expenses to obtain the laudations that men have heaped upon him.

The first scheme he adopted was to heat the water in the water-tank. This was about eighteen months ago. He covered the safety valve of the engine with a box to catch the waste steam, and this box had a pipe attached to it to convey the steam into the tank. In consequence of this plan the engine was run with the greatest possible danger, the driver being unable to ascertain what pressure of steam there was upon the boiler, and Mr. M'Connell, seeing the danger he had thus created, was obliged to abandon the project. It was a matter of the greatest surprise to every one, that a gentleman, so scientific as Captain Moorsom is allowed to be, could sanction such an invention for a single day.

The next plan to which Mr. M'Connell had recourse was—and this was suggested to him—to pierce the top of the dome, and place a stop-

\* So much for this prediction, when 10s. per day are now given.—V. V.

cock to convey the steam at pleasure into the tank, which answered very well. With this simple plan, however, he was not content, for in altering the other engine he connected a number of pipes with the tank, and suspended them above the blast-pipe, expecting that those pipes would receive all the hot air from the smoke-box, and that the force of the steam upon the mouth of the pipes would drive the heated air into the tank, never dreaming, it would seem, that when the tank came to be filled with cold water, and of course above the level of those tubes, all the water above the level would be discharged through them into the smoke-box, and from the lower row of the boiler-tubes the water would return into the fire-box and put out the fire. So much for the engineering judgment of Mr. M'Connell! Besides putting out the fire, those pipes affected the blast so much that the engine could not get along, and he was then obliged to plug up all the pipes and return to the original plan which was recommended to him upon his first failure. Those pipes had, moreover, the injurious effect of receiving all the grease that came from the cylinders, and dust from the smoke-box, which caused the engines to prime. A plough-boy might have foreseen this evil, but a practical and (would-be) theoretical Engineer of the first water it seems could not.

In making the water-tanks Mr. M'Connell—although, like his friend Mr. Matthew Kirtley on the Derby, provided with a draftsman—failed in making a proper calculation of the height they should be above the engines, to allow them to get under the jibs of the water-cranes, and when finished they were found to be nearly twelve inches too high. The tanks, therefore, had to be cut down; and when this had been done, and they were again taken to the water-crane, he found that they were still too high, and to avoid the expense of again cutting them, he ordered the jibs of the cranes to be cut, to admit the engine under them. For such inventions as these he received the present I mentioned in one of my former letters.

To carry out "economy," Mr. M'Connell's salary was to be raised, and accordingly he had recourse to the reduction of the drivers' wages, which has proved, as on the North Midland, a serious loss to the Company. But while he was thus affecting the most valuable servants of the Company, he entirely overlooked the most ridiculous and extravagant staff of locomotive clerks. Their number and duties are as follows:—Mr. S. takes the men's time at Bromsgrove; Mr. P. is storekeeper; Mr. A. is draftsman to the repairing shop; Mr. M. is the clerk receiving the time from the timekeeper, and making out the pay-sheet which Mr. H. the principal receives for examination. The gentleman last alluded to is also *Private Secretary* to Mr. M'Connell! The number of engines which those five gentlemen have to attend to are two mail engines, one goods' engine from Gloucester, two day-train engines from ditto, one day-train engine from Bromsgrove, one ditto from Birmingham, one goods' engine from ditto, three pilot engines, and one on the Lickey incline; thus numbering twelve engines, and to keep an account of them there are five clerks at Bromsgrove, a storekeeper at Gloucester, another at Birmingham, and a Superintendent, being about one and a quarter engines to each man! I wonder what has become of the new

economising Director, Mr. Tate! I suppose he has fallen through the trap-door of patronage, just as did Colonel Blane and Mr. Crawshaw on the Derby line, to whose vigilance I shall hereafter refer.

Your correspondent of last week "A Shareholder,"\* to whom I am indebted for substantiating my remarks on the Derby line, recommended me to make some little inquiry regarding the permanent way and its contractors. I took his advice, and have been as far as Cheltenham; and am now in possession of two of the contracts as drawn up by Capt. W. S. Moorsom. On inquiry, it would seem as if the last contract had been let under suspicious circumstances. There were several offers given in according to the contract referred to, and these offers were to the effect that the contractors were to provide everything, with the exception of rails, and were also to keep all the bridges, tunnels, and other brick work, except station buildings, in a proper state of repair, and at the time the contract was entered into, any unfinished work was to be completed by the contractor. After the offers had been given in, the contract alluded to was put aside, and a new one was made out, by which the contractor was not to be required to furnish anything, or keep the works in repair; all he has to do is to attend to the permanent way only. This new contract was not offered to competition; none of the former offerers knew anything at all about it; it was given to the present parties for about 20*l.* per mile less than the former offers, but they were to be paid for all extra work, such as the replacing of sleepers, &c. The whole of the beech sleepers are so much decayed that they must be

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\* The following is the letter above referred to:—

SIR,—I and many of my brother shareholders were not a little surprised at the mis-statements set forth by "Justitia," in reply to your correspondent "Veritas Vincit," but we were much more so when we read his second production respecting the permanent way and works of the Birmingham and Derby Railway. I can confirm the whole of "Veritas Vincit's" statements as to the bad condition not only of the quicks and ditches, but of the road. For about four miles in the neighbourhood of Tamworth there is scarcely enough ballast to support and keep the sleepers firm, and in case of a carriage wheel breaking or getting off the line, there is no telling how many lives might be sacrificed by the striking of the wheels against the sleepers. I wonder what the Directors are thinking of. Would it not be better for Mr. Robert Stephenson to inspect the line at once, and make a report to be laid before the Directors? Another important matter ought to be taken into consideration, and that is, the great quantity of sleepers lying at Burton and Birmingham stations. Why not offer them for sale by auction? They are decreasing in value every day, and also getting fewer in number. What objection can the Directors have to sell all the old iron chairs, &c.? The London and Birmingham Company sold theirs at Camden Town.

The shareholders of the Derby line are not alone indebted to your correspondent "Veritas Vincit" for his exposures, but the shareholders of the Gloucester line also, for by his labours they are to reap a real saving. In one of his former letters he pointed out the utter uselessness of Mr. Wetherall, General Superintendent, and his expensive staff, and the effect of those observations has been that this staff is all to be removed by Christmas. I also notice that "Veritas Vincit" is to return to this line. Before he does so, I would recommend him to make some little inquiries regarding the permanent way and its contractors. He will find there is much need of remark. I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

A BIRMINGHAM AND DERBY AND BIRMINGHAM AND  
GLOUCESTER SHAREHOLDER.

Highgate, Camp Hill, October 17, 1843.

replaced. If you refer to the last half-yearly accounts, you will see a considerable item for sleepers. According to Capt. W. S. Moorsom's contract, the Coffin tunnel would have been completed by the contractor, and he would also have had to make good all the ricketty bridges. All the bridges and repairing walls are now contracted for to be only partially repaired for about 1,000*l.* The expense of finishing the Coffin tunnel I have no means of learning. I could give more particulars regarding the present system of putting in new sleepers, but it would lead me to be too personal. What I have stated above is another strong caution to Directors generally not to give any one contractor more than ten or twelve miles to attend to.

In returning to the Birmingham and Derby, and other lines, I beg leave most distinctly to state, that I adhere to every statement I made in my last, and that no scurrility shall make me swerve from my purpose, nor shall I be afraid of any one, for I shall never advance anything which I cannot fully substantiate.

With respect to the permanent way of the Derby line, I find that Mr. Joseph Peyton is doing nothing to the ballast, nor is he replacing the blanks in the quick, nor has he taken up the damaged rail, that I mentioned in my last. I have been down the line again, and, as I foretold, one of the splits has sprung so much, that the friend who was with me pressed it down to prevent it catching the wheels of the engine. Mr. Sewell, the Company's Inspector, made a strange remark the other day regarding this. He said the Company were not in possession of any rails to replace the injured ones. Now, if this be true, the Directors are far from attending to their duty. He also stated that he had by far too many miles to look over to attend to the line efficiently. I do not know what part of the line he *does* inspect, for within two miles of Derby it is in as bad condition as at this end.

Your correspondent, "Subscriber," recommends a very proper plan, namely, that Mr. Stephenson should be requested to inspect the line; and this would at once *settle* Mr. Joseph Peyton, who so impudently asserts that no line in England is in better condition.

The locomotive and other management on this line is certainly unparalleled. On Saturday, the connecting shaft of the lift-engine broke, when Mr. Kirtley, without consideration, set off for Manchester to get another, and did not inform the proper officer of the London and Gloucester lines that no carriages or waggons could be let down the lift until the engine was repaired, thereby causing much inconvenience. No person having the least pretensions to engineering knowledge would have thought of going from Birmingham to Manchester to get a plain cast-iron shaft, about four or five feet long and five or six inches in diameter. It could have been got ready almost in the time Mr. K. took to go down; at all events, there could have been no difficulty in having the engine repaired by Monday morning; whereas to-day, four days since it broke, nothing is done!

The two superintending gentlemen upon this line have a most extraordinary propensity for travelling. On Sunday Mr. Kirtley was at Manchester, Mr. Alport somewhere else: and from bad arrangements, mismanagement or deficiency, or negligence of the police, some one

entered the booking-office, opening the doors, and re-locking them, and abstracted from the clerk's drawers from seventy to eighty sovereigns in gold. Where was the cashier, that he did not receive this money and deposit it in the iron safe, with which the office is provided? What would Colonel Blane have said to this had it occurred before he had a seat at the Board?

What are the "amalgamated" Directors about? They have made alterations in the running of trains, but there seems to be nothing doing in the reductions of the office establishments. There are more clerks at the Derby station than would be sufficient for all the three lines at Derby. There are three Locomotive Superintendents, two of them totally unqualified, and now perfectly unnecessary; the third is Mr. J. Kearsley, Locomotive Superintendent on the Midland Counties' line, who is a gentleman in whom the Directors could place every confidence. Let any one enter his establishment and he will see engines in the best possible state of repair, the greater portion of the machinery having been reconstructed under his own eye. When I was last in Derby I saw an engine which had run upwards of 10,000 miles, and had undergone no repairs, and was in perfect condition to go out at any time. Not so with the North Midland. I shall just refer to one engine which I saw running, that is No. 61; and I would put it to Mr. Kearsley, if he would consider himself justified in sending out an engine in the same rickety state. I am confident he would not.

The length to which this letter has extended compels me to defer until another week some remarks I had intended to offer on the York and North Midland and Leeds and Selby lines.

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## LETTER XIX.

Birmingham, November 7, 1843.

SINCE the date of my last I have had a trip over the three amalgamated Midland lines, and as far as York, and during that time I had opportunities of conversing with several individuals who are deeply interested as to the expected saving and increased dividend that will arise, consequent upon the three lines being worked under one efficient establishment at Derby. The only fear that appears to me to exist is, that the individuals who may be selected to this new and combined establishment will not be men justly entitled, from previous knowledge, professional practice, and due experience, to their relative positions—the fear is, that that *infernal machine* called patronage will be fully charged, and that the most important offices will be filled up by itinerant and would-be-thought superlatively excellent Superintendents, similar to those who in too many instances have led to the deterioration of Railway Companies' property and loss of life. I would seriously warn the new Board to be particularly guarded against this evil, and be very careful whom they appoint as a Locomotive Superintendent, for his duties above all others are of the most important description, as regards true and substantial economy. You know, Sir, the evil and destruction that

have attended pseudo-economy, and the jeopardy to which the public have been exposed.

In the course of my journey, and from general observations made to me, a maxim recurred to my mind which I would particularly recommend to the notice of Mr. George Hudson and his colleague Sir John Simpson, namely, "that the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." I can assure these gentlemen that it will be in vain to think to mislead such a large body of proprietary as those three Companies comprise. It has always been a matter of surprise to me, that any set of Directors could be persuaded to send to Mr. Cabrey for locomotive instruction (a gentleman who never knew anything theoretically of the locomotive engine, and what he has practically done he copied from others) when there are such individuals as a Wood and a Deurance on the Liverpool and Manchester, a Gray on the Hull and Selby, and a Kearsley on the Midland Counties', all of whom proved themselves to be theoretically and practically acquainted with the responsible and important duties of a Locomotive Superintendent. If the new Board *do* appoint a person possessed of talents equal to any of the above-named gentlemen, he will, in a few months, restore the fallen confidence of the public.

Before I enter into detail, I would most respectfully beg leave to recommend to a lady in the city of York, to another in a great town in Lancashire, and to a clergyman on the borders of the Grand Junction, not to further interfere in locomotive matters, either directly or indirectly; the two first to attend to their domestic duties, the latter to his clerical, and in future to be particularly careful not to hold out threats to dissenting workmen that he will obtain their discharge if they do not attend his church, and send the children to be educated in his particular tenets. I would also give a hint to a Locomotive Superintendent in that quarter, not to dip more deeply into priestly matters than he has already, especially as his opinions upon this head have been to the opposite extremes within the last few years. If these hints are not taken, I shall in a future letter be a little more plain. What, Sir, will Railway Directorship arrive at when *ladies* are in requisition to assist; although, indeed, I have not the least doubt that many a sempstress's "tea party" could be found fully as able to discuss locomotive business, and other railway matters, as some of the Boards that now exist!

I shall now proceed with my promised remarks on the York and North Midland and Mr. Cabrey; but before doing so, I shall take the liberty of quoting a sentence from your Editorial remarks in your journal of the 28th ultimo "We know," you say, "that with some it is a favourite notion that the mere 'machine' makes a better railway servant than the man of greater general knowledge." Mr. George Hudson appears to be of the same opinion, by his appointment of Mr. Cabrey; and Mr. Cabrey, with respect to his inferiors, has uniformly followed the same example, as I pointed out in a former letter. Not long since he made the following observations to one of his men (I could name him if it were necessary)—that he was No. 2 on his list for foreman at Selby, "and that he wanted nothing but half fools for their work." This Mr. Cabrey was not contented to be



reported the "most eminent Locomotive Engineer and Railway Superintendent," for he also had the assurance to dabble with civil engineering, and with what results to the Company you and your readers will be able to judge as I proceed.

I beg to ask Sir John Simpson whether, when he invited the party of the Brighton Directors to visit the York and North Midland to show off Mr. Cabrey's talents, he pointed out to them the Ulleskelf bridge, which is now being reconstructed? Did he point out to them the cause of this double expense? Did he inform them that Mr. Cabrey took upon himself to act as Civil Engineer, and that when the bridge was completed it was found defective? Did he state to them that the plan of the bridge now being constructed Mr. Cabrey had copied from the Blackwall, with some trifling alterations to adapt it to the place? Did he express his regret that the imprudence of his friend Mr. Hudson, in entrusting such a piece of architecture to a man who can have no possible knowledge of the profession, had rendered the reconstruction necessary? Did he state that Mr. Cabrey was not only a Locomotive and Civil Engineer, but that he was also a carriage-builder of the first order? Did he point out to them that Mr. Cabrey had made some "improved" third-class carriages, which it was found necessary to convert into carriage trucks? Did he request them to examine the condition the carriage grease-boxes were in? I examined Nos. 6, 11, 12, 16, and 17, and was informed that the other carriages and wag-gons are in an equally bad state, so much so, that when they run on other lines, the Companies are put to additional expense for grease and for extra power. When a number of them are to be attached to a train on any of the adjoining lines, the drivers exclaim, "Oh, we cannot get along with so many of them there Yorkers." Heated carriage and waggon axles, and boiling grease in the boxes, are quite unknown on the Liverpool and Manchester.

When Sir John introduced his friend to the Brighton Board, did he inform them that Mr. Cabrey could not compete with his neighbour Mr. Gray in the conveyance of the luggage, and that when Mr. Gray's luggage engine brought up a train it was a very common occurrence that three of Mr. Cabrey's engines had to be attached to take the same train on?

When Mr. Gray altered several of the engines which were on the line previous to his arrival, he increased the lap considerably. (Mr. Thomas Kirtley diminished his.) Mr. Cabrey heard of the success of the plan, and immediately followed Mr. Gray's example, making the same alteration in two of his engines, the *Albert* and *Victoria*; but after he had seen Mr. Gray's patent engines at work, he found himself behind again. To keep pace with Mr. Gray, he also ordered two engines, the *Antelope* and *Ariel*, on the principle of Mr. Gray's patent. They have 13-inch cylinders, 22-inch stroke, and 6-foot wheels. He afterwards thought he would beat Mr. Gray, and ordered two other engines from Newcastle, *Princess* and *Mercury*, without Mr. Gray's patent motion, and altering some of Mr. Gray's dimensions. They have 13-inch cylinders, 22-inch stroke, and 5-foot 6-inch wheels. Here he found his mistake; he lost power by his alteration, and was obliged to have recourse to Mr. Gray's former

plan of increasing the lap! Again, after Mr. Gray got his improved goods' engines, Mr. C. sent his draftsman (you must know that *he* has a draftsman as well as others!) to take the dimensions, which he sent to Newcastle, and ordered two engines upon the same principle, and now he has two excellent goods' engines, for the construction of which he ascribes to himself all praise. There need not now be a matter of surprise to the shareholders in the answer Mr. Hudson gave Mr. Ellis at the general half-yearly meeting, that they sent out their engines to get new fire-boxes!

This, Sir, is only an outline of the proceedings of the would-be sole and supreme Locomotive Director of Great Britain, who had the confidence to go to the Brighton line to give a regularly bred engineer instructions on locomotive power!

A rumour is afloat on the Hull and Selby, that it is in contemplation to revive an obsolete office for the benefit of a relation of one of the officials. I trust that if such a proposition be brought forward, the Board will at once put it aside, and prevent much public discussion.

It was my intention to return to the Grand Junction after reading your excellent remarks upon that most extraordinary Direction. I have not room, however, in this letter, but in my next I shall throw some light on the subject. If I had space I would also notice Mr. Kirtley again. His lift-engine is still unrepaired, and I shall just notice a most dangerous and imprudent step he has taken to-day; he has sent out with one of the passenger trains a mere inexperienced boy, as a fireman. He could be of no possible use in the event of an accident, nor can he have any "weight" upon the brake. I shall return to this next week, and other important occurrences; and also answer some of the questions your correspondent "Watchman" put to me in your paper of last week. There are some of them rather out of my course, which I have no intention of deviating from unless I am compelled to do so to substantiate my accuracy.

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## LETTER XX.

Birmingham, November 27, 1843.

IN your paper of the 4th instant, I requested you would inform your Birkenhead correspondent that when I returned home I would not overlook his wish. Since my arrival I have been so engaged that it has been out of my power to reach that line, but I have made arrangements to go to Chester in the course of next week.

In the concluding part of my last I also promised to follow up some of your observations on the Grand Junction Direction; those I shall defer at present, because in my visit to the Chester and Birkenhead, I must go over the Grand Junction, and besides, there is to be a "grand fete" given to the workmen and their families, connected with the line, at Crewe, on Saturday afternoon next. There is also to be a display of fireworks; the particulars I shall be able to learn in the course of my journey; and to the prudence or imprudence of such a demon-

stration, and its probable results, I shall probably in my next letter refer. An occurrence, however, took place on this line last Saturday, which I cannot allow to pass unnoticed even for a week, as it was fraught with much danger and delay to passengers on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. Before adverting further to it I would beg leave to refer to my letter of the 19th June, which appeared in your paper of the 24th of the same month, in which I mentioned the imprudence of Superintendent Allen, of Crewe, in sending out as a driver an inexperienced fitter, and that this "driver" obstructed the line, to the great danger of the trains. On that occasion the brakesman and fireman were discharged; the *fitter* (he was not a driver) was retained, although, as I pointed out, he gave evident proofs that he was not qualified to have the very responsible duty of conducting an engine on any line, far less on an important line like the Grand Junction, on which there is so much traffic. On Saturday last, then, this same fitter was dispatched from Crewe with an engine at 10.45 P.M. to Warrington, and arrived there at 1.15 A.M., thus taking two and a-half hours to run with an engine about twenty-four miles only! He proceeded thence with thirty-five empty waggons for Liverpool, and was assisted up the Warrington incline by a coal engine. He then with considerable difficulty reached Sutton incline, which he was unable to ascend, whereupon he was assisted by the *Bat* bank engine, belonging to the Liverpool and Manchester Company. This Company's foreman, Mr. Allison, was on the engine, and he can bear testimony to the fact, that the fitter had no "signal lamp" with him from the time he left Warrington—a most dangerous and unjustifiable proceeding. Having reached the top of the incline, the *Bat* engine passed him by the sidings, and proceeded before him to Liverpool. The switchman at Sutton station expostulated with the fitter upon the danger of running a train of empty waggons without a signal lamp, for had any of the waggons broken loose (which is not an uncommon thing), and of course been left upon the main line without a signal lamp behind, what fatal results might not have occurred with the Manchester passenger train, which was fast approaching! As that train was getting nearly due, the switchman informed the fitter that he would not allow him to proceed without a lamp behind, and the consequence was that the switchman had no alternative but to direct the brakesman to go to Messrs. Bourns and Robisons' coal-wharf, and borrow one. During this time, the fitter, without shifting his waggons, left them on the main line, and went to the top of Whiston incline for water. Before he returned, the Manchester passenger train had come up, and was detained by this unwarrantable obstruction of the main line upwards of forty-five minutes. From being an inefficient driver, he had to part his train at this place and proceed to Liverpool, and return again with the remainder, which he accomplished by 8.5 A.M., thus occupying seven hours in conveying thirty-five empty waggons a distance of not more than nineteen miles, being two hours longer than a second-class train takes to run about 100 miles, to say nothing of the obstruction he created, for he delayed a Liverpool train and a Grand Junction train previous to the one above noticed. The borrowed signal lamp was extinguished on a considerable part of the line.

You will very naturally ask on whom should the blame rest of thus persisting in sending out such a man with an engine? I would answer, that it must rest either on Mr. Trevethick, or one of the two foremen, John Shaw or G. Simmington, at Crewe, for Mr. Allen was at Liverpool. Should neither of the above be blameable, then of course the fault must rest upon Mr. Allen; but will the Directors of a well regulated line, like the Liverpool and Manchester, submit to such dangerous favouritism as is shown in keeping this fitter on as an engineman on the Grand Junction? Certainly not—even should it be so ordered by all the captains and lieutenants who abound on this line, and whose whims are immeasurable, as I shall hereafter show.

In my last, I promised to refer also to some important occurrences on the Birmingham and Derby line; but as I know that the Directors are interfering with some of them, I shall at present desist—for I would rather look at the bright side of the picture than dwell on locomotive mismanagement, which gives so indifferent a prospect for the future. There was, however, a serious affair befel the 6 P.M. passenger train out of Derby last Saturday, within a few miles of Whitacre, on the Birmingham side, which must be now alluded to. The train was running above forty miles an hour, when the engine came in contact with two horses, knocked them down, and cut them in pieces, but fortunately no other damage was done except throwing three passenger carriages off the line, and alarming the passengers to a great degree. It is not for me to say who were the parties to blame for allowing the horses to get on the line. The proprietor of the horses, and the officials of the line, are very opposite in their allegations upon this point, but the fact of numerous instances of sheep and cattle straying upon this railway is notorious. Not long since I noticed several sheep having been killed by one of the trains. If Mr. Joseph Peyton would mind his own business, instead of writing letters to you, perhaps these "accidents" would be less frequent. On the 16th October your barefaced correspondent "Justitia" very boldly contradicted me, and said that there was not on the North Midland line an engine-driver of the name of Hulse, whom I took notice of as having broken down with two engines. This individual was continued on that line, but as he got his discharge last week, it would be useless to enter further into the matter. I only mention it for the purpose of reassuring you and your readers that I am always very guarded as to the correctness of my statements.

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## LETTER XXI.

Birmingham, December 12, 1843.

In my last letter I noticed that there was to be a grand fete on the 2nd instant at Crewe station, given by the Directors of the Grand Junction Railway Company to the locomotive establishment of that place. There have been various local accounts of it, but those accounts being of a partial nature, and as I have of late so identified myself with every important occurrence that has come under my notice in locomotive

management, I hope you will indulge me, and many of your readers, by inserting a general outline of the fete from me, which I took on the spot. I have been over the Chester and Birkenhead; of the result of that journey I shall apprise you next week.

On the day referred to, I arrived at Crewe. It is certainly a splendid station, and almost completely finished. Although the shops have been occupied nearly twelve months, still this was styled by the Directors the "opening of the works." Having procured a ticket of admission, I proceeded to the place. There was a profusion of flags floating in the breeze, the royal jack surmounting them all from the highest part of the building. In a field close by were half-a-dozen six-pounders, which at different periods of the day were not idle. I then visited the rooms which were tastefully fitted up; they were in the coach building department. The one on the ground floor was appropriated for the dinner. This room is capable of dining 800 persons. The entrance was at one end, on the right of which were painted the royal arms; on the other side of the entrance were placed two mailed knights of grim visage. At the other end of this large room, to the left of the entrance, was placed the chair, over which was painted on canvass extending the whole width of the room, in large letters, "Prosperity to the Grand Junction Railway," and over the chair were the crown and cushion. In this place I expected to have seen the whole of the servants connected with the Grand Junction that could be spared from their duties, but in this I was disappointed, for the locomotive fitters at Liverpool and those at Vauxhall station did not receive tickets. I know it was the design and intention of the Directors that they should have tickets, but these orders did not seem to have been carried out to the strict letter.

Everything having been announced ready, about 300 sat down to dinner, Mr. Allen, Superintendent at Crewe, placing himself in the chair. On the right of the chair, in *clerical robes*, sat the chaplain appointed to the establishment. On the word "Order," from the Chairman, there were seen approaching a number of the Directors, accompanied by their Secretary; Mr. Locke unostentatiously followed in their train. Having taken their seats, and the dinner over, Mr. Braithwaite Poole began prompting the Chairman from behind, in so rough a manner as nearly to push him off his seat, telling him it was now time for him to propose the first toast. Thereupon the Chairman got upon his legs, and imperfectly, and almost inaudibly, muttered out "The Queen," which was shouted, as if through a trumpet, by Mr. B. Poole, without which condescending assistance the company would not have known what the toast was. The three succeeding toasts were prompted and announced in a similar manner—"Prince Albert," "Prince of Wales," "Queen Dowager, and the rest of the Royal Family." Mr. Allen then gave "Prosperity to the Grand Junction Railway," which was echoed by the stentorian lungs of Mr. B. P. Mr. Moss, Chairman of the Directors, responded to this toast with ease and ability. Part of his address ran thus: "I am fully persuaded that many of you (the workmen) in coming here (meaning to the new village) have deprived yourselves of many sweet enjoyments, the pleasing stir and busy hum of populous and engaging localities; the early ties of parents, kindred, love, and

affection ; but I and my brother Directors are most sincerely anxious to use all our endeavours in making you as happy and comfortable as possible. Time is all we require to mature what we contemplate in your behalf, and I hope before long we shall be enabled to establish for you a good library and a commodious news-room."

The next toast was, "The Chairman and Directors," which was responded to by the Liverpool and Manchester Chairman in a most laughable manner, in which he said something about the flourishing state of the establishment under Mr. Trevethick. Many a look was given from one to another as to what the honourable gentleman could possibly be referring to ; for, as I have frequently before remarked, Mr. T. is only a useless drone on the establishment.

The next toast was, "The Ladies of the Education Committee for instructing the Children." A workman named Nugent, a turner, cautioned the ladies not to interfere in too arbitrary a way with the consciences of individuals, either parents or children—fixing his eyes on the clerical-robed gentleman before mentioned—and at the same time hinting, that they could follow out their very laudable pursuits without infringing upon the religious liberty of any one.

The health of Mr. Locke was then proposed, and was received with the most rapturous applause by the whole assembly : the workmen continued cheering for some minutes. When this burst of heartfelt gratitude had subsided, Mr. Locke rose, which was the signal for another ebullition of prolonged cheering. Mr. Locke, in the course of the many topics he touched upon, addressing himself to the workmen, said—"The works and line on which it is your good fortune to be employed, are superior to any other line where it has been my fortune to have placed my foot. The safety with which the line is worked, and the speed attained, are unparalleled. The engines are the finest in the kingdom ; and the enginemen who manage the engines are most indisputably allowed to be the best that have ever taken upon themselves the performance of such responsible duties. This I am prepared to prove, and I now declare it with the utmost sincerity and frankness."

In the latter part of this speech I most cordially agree with Mr. Locke ; but with reference to the character he gives the engines I humbly beg leave to differ, knowing well that he is most decidedly in error on that point.

The next toast was, "Captain Huish and the other officers connected with the Company." After an unsuccessful attempt by some individuals around the Chairman to get up applause at the mention of Captain Huish's name, I heard some half suppressed groans proceeding from the body of the room, which I believe Captain H. himself noticed, for when he got upon his legs he almost immediately began to allude to obedience, and excused the necessity of punishments for what he calls insubordination (a military and naval term of course), telling them about his anxiety for their individual comforts, but at the same time that the duties of all must be attended to, "and," said he in conclusion, "I beg to remind you of your welfare not only here but hereafter, and I most sincerely wish you to attend to the praiseworthy efforts and advice of the Rev. Mr. Appleton, the chaplain of this great establishment." He sat down after proposing the health of the Rev. Mr. Appleton.

The reverend gentleman rose amidst some noise and confusion, and uttered about half-a-dozen words, which from the position I was in I could not distinctly hear, and then he sat down.

The health of Mr. Waddington, Deputy-Chairman of the Manchester and Birmingham Railway, was next given. That gentleman acknowledged the compliment in a pithy address.

"The workmen of Crewe, together with their wives and families," was next proposed by Mr. John Moss, in a speech which did him great credit as a philanthropist and a gentleman.

Mr. Samuel Holmes, builder, Liverpool, returned thanks in the name of the workmen, being the building contractor. In the course of his oration, he spoke about transcendent victories—mighty conquerors—Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon—the deepest mines, the earth's wide surface, the "gilded" (gliding ?) train, and its "speedy flight;" he also drew a somewhat comical comparison between the disciples of Father Matthew and a locomotive steam-engine, and their similarity in principle and practice. He said also, and with truth—and there were some present who ought to have taken a lesson from it—"No man had a right to use the muscles and bones of his fellow-man for purposes of gain, without at the same time giving intellectual and moral improvement, not only to those whom they might employ, but to their offspring for whom the employed had to labour; and in doing so," he said, "he would force no man's conscience, for to his own 'master' must every man stand or fall."

The next toast was, "Mr. Norris and Mr. Trevethick, Locomotive Superintendents."

Mr. Norris returned thanks in a very proper and unostentatious manner—brief, simple, and pleasing, and on concluding was much cheered.

Mr. Trevethick rose amidst much uproar and tumult, careless evidently of what he said. He appeared at first somewhat bewildered; but when he had come a little to himself, he looked with an authoritative air towards the noisy part of the room, talked about the "winter season"—"they could not work in their gardens"—a "sick club"—that "he would do what he could for a news room," and thanked the ladies for their attention.

The health of Mr. Worsdell, of the carriage department, was next given. This gentleman rose amidst deafening applause, and courteously declared that, so long as he remained on that establishment, he would ever have their interests at heart, and would be always ready to render them any assistance within his power.

Mr. Locke again rose, and proposed the health of the foreman of the works,—“he meant Mr. Allen, who had so ably filled the chair that day.”

If it were not that monstrous exaggeration was, considering the occasion, allowable on the part of Mr. Locke, I should have been surprised; but I could not help admiring Mr. Locke so smilingly bestowing such an honour, in the absence of all merit. It was eagerly sought for, and by one to whom, as was universally acknowledged, it ought not to have been given. "His anxiety," said Mr. Locke, "for the interest of the Company was beyond all praise;" but notwithstanding this from Mr. Locke, I have good and substantial reasons for differing with him on this point,

as well as on many others, as regards the Grand Junction. Did Mr. Locke mean that Mr. Allen's extreme interest was manifested by giving directions to his foremen to "watch certain persons that might come as spies?" Was it because he had "botched" seven engines at an enormous expense, while Mr. Marshall, Superintendent at Liverpool, altered two of the same kind successfully, and at a trifling expense, and which do their work well to the present day? Did Mr. Locke praise him because he said he would keep up his revenge, if it should be for twenty years, against certain enginemen, for exposing his botching work on the *Lynx*, *Medusa*, and *Diamond*?

Mr Holmes then proposed the concluding toast, which was, "Prosperity to the juvenile City of Crewe." From what I can learn, no other person to the end of time will ever have such a good "metallic" reason for inventing and proposing this toast.

The tea-table and ball followed. I have only time to remark, that the room had a very animated and splendid appearance, and I should think there could not have been fewer than 1,300 persons present. I was sorry to observe that many of the humbler class were not permitted to enjoy this pleasing sight. The fire-works were very gratifying to many who had never seen the like before.

Instead of the expense and splendour which the Directors lavished on this occasion, the same sum of money would have been by far more beneficially spent by providing each separate family with a good Christmas dinner. It would in some measure have made up for the privations which many of them were subjected to on their arrival there. Their wages were lowered; there was the expense of removing; the houses were damp, the coal dear, and all family necessaries to be brought from a distance; and yet it was expected that the whole body would extol their masters, and declare that black was white, from the getting up of this fete. The principal part of it was more gratifying to the surrounding petty aristocracy than to the workmen's families.

While I am speaking of Crewe, I shall just mention what Mr. Trevethick ordered the other day. John Hadly, engineman, who runs from Crewe to Chester, allowed his fireman to take out his engine from the shed on to the line, for which he was fined 10s. The fireman has been many years in this capacity, and is quite competent to be a driver, so far as practice goes. Compare this harsh measure with the treatment of a fitter whom I mentioned in my last, and who has been so repeatedly allowed to run on the line without experience and practice, to the great danger of the public; and who, from all that he has done, he is by Messrs. Trevethick and Allen completely exonerated, to the great astonishment of the Liverpool and Manchester officials!

At first sight, I have no doubt you will say, what has the Queen's visit to Tamworth to do with locomotive management? But it gives a beautiful illustration of some of my former allegations against certain parties, as to their unfitness for the important offices they hold. When it was announced that her Majesty was to be at Watford on a certain day, Mr. Bury, Locomotive Superintendent of the London and Birmingham Railway, did not find it necessary to order any particular engine to be put into the shed, to undergo a special repair to convey Royalty



down the line. That gentleman manages to have his engines kept in such a thorough state of repair that I believe it would matter little as to safety what engine might be fixed upon. There is, no doubt, a difference in some of them with regard to power, but not as to being in an efficient state. When the news reached the Birmingham and Derby, Mr. Matthew Kirtley was "put upon his pins." He ordered the *Barton* engine to be taken into the shed, and completely overhauled, in case she might break down, for he had not confidence in any of his stock to convey Royalty. When his brother, Mr. Thomas Kirtley, of the North Midland, heard the news, he also was obliged to resort to the same expedient as his brother Mr. Matthew. He ordered No. 20 into the shed, and that engine went under repair. But when the tidings reached the ears of Mr. Josiah Kearsley, Locomotive Superintendent on the Midland Counties', he was, like Mr. Bury, quite prepared: for he keeps the whole of his engines in such perfect order, that he is ready to convey Royalty at a moment's notice any day.

If there be honour in conducting an engine when Royalty is in the train, then certainly Mr. Kearsley can claim that honour above all other Superintendents in the kingdom. He was not like Mr. M. Kirtley, who had with him on the foot-plate an experienced engineman and one or two others, and yet gave it out to the Editors of the papers that he conducted the engine, when it was no such thing. Mr. Thomas Kirtley of the North Midland did the same. Mr. Kearsley, on the two occasions, drove her Majesty and suite. He took a fireman on the foot-plate with him, put on a jacket, and conducted the engine himself; thereby showing, as I formerly stated, that he is truly a practical as well as a theoretical Superintendent.

While I am treating of the qualifications of Superintendents, I cannot refrain from stating that Mr. M. Kirtley, at the Birmingham station, does not give due thought and deliberation to the alterations of his engines. He not only creates an enormous expense to the Company, but he also endangers the lives of his men, which will appear from the following circumstance, which occurred on Wednesday morning last:— Previous to the *Barton* being taken to work, the steam was got up to a very high pressure. From the alterations Mr. K. has made upon this engine I believe that she is obliged to be worked at a pressure of nearly 100lbs. upon the square inch. The boiler burst below and the boiling water was exhausted in a minute, and if either the engineman or fireman had been under the engine examining it at the time, he would have been scalded to death; and it is customary that engines are so examined before being attached to a train. I shall point out the cause of this disaster, and leave you and your readers to form your own opinions. This engine, about ten months ago, was sent to Leeds to get a new copper fire-box, a new set of tubes, and new cylinders. On her return she was put into the shed for the purpose of having her engine put in. Mr. Kirtley, like his brother Mr. Thomas, must have a dabble at all improvements. In the fixing of his way-bar, he was compelled to suspend it by a bracket on the lower side of the boiler, and he knew no other method than by screwing the bracket to the plates. From the water not being very good on the Derby line, and from the age of the

boiler, when the plate was drilled it was found not to be more than three-sixteenths thick. He was told that it would be impossible for this plate to sustain the pressure, and besides, the lever that reversed the motion, by his alteration, required sometimes two men to reverse the engine. The whole of this leverage became upon the bracket, and hence the occurrence above related. Before this engine can be put into a safe and proper state, the whole must be taken down, the tubes taken out of the boiler, and a new plate properly put in, and the engine rebuilt again. This is economy with a witness! I have also some remarks to make regarding the *Tamworth* engine, but I have not space now; I shall notice it next week.

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## LETTER XXII.

Birmingham, December 20, 1843.

IN the preamble of my last I promised to give you in my present communication the result of my journey over the Chester and Birkenhead Railway, but from a variety of circumstances connected therewith I must defer it until your second publication of the new year, when, with your permission, I shall devote a letter to that ill-fated line. I also said that I would follow up my remarks upon Mr. Matthew Kirtley and his Derby engines, but before doing so allow me to make one or two remarks upon passing events.

In the first place, I have to acknowledge the request of your Derby correspondent, that I should give my opinion upon the Barton station "sweep." It is entirely out of my department, and although I am perfectly cognizant of what has transpired, still, under present circumstances, it would be very imprudent of me to disclose what I know. The parties were legally examined and committed, and one is now out on bail, and therefore your correspondent and his brother shareholders must remain contented for the present, and watch the ulterior proceedings which must take place. I shall only say that the parties most deeply implicated in this unfortunate concern declare that they did nothing but what they were instructed to do by a superior. Should this turn out to be the case, the shareholders in a very few weeks will have it in their power to express their opinion.

The next passing event has reference to the Grand Junction Railway. I have repeatedly noticed this line as respects locomotive management. No later than in my last I referred to the exoneration of a fitter. Messrs. Trevethick and Allen, it appears, were determined that they would make this man a cheap driver, no doubt copying from Mr. M'Connell on the Gloucester, and the latter gentleman taking the lesson from the would-be paragon of Locomotive Superintendents, Cabrey, on the York and North Midland, of whom, as regards his stepping into the shoes of Mr. Statham on the Brighton, I shall hereafter have something to say.

The number of locomotive gentlemen upon the Grand Junction line is perfectly ridiculous. In the name of wonder what have they to do? There is one in particular who has a high salary for doing literally nothing. He attained his majority last Wednesday, and gave a hand-

some Crewe fete. You would be surprised if I were to inform you of the nature of the principal toasts given, and would see how easy it is to "diddle" shareholders.

In my last communication, I referred to Mr. M. Kirtley and his "improvements" on his engines. The engine I noticed he has had the temerity to send out again. He ordered a plate to be screwed upon the burnt plate, which will eventually create another explosion; and in further proof of my charges relative to his abilities as a Locomotive Superintendent, I may state that his "improved" working gear created so much friction, that the connecting rods of both engines gave way, and the consequence was that the cylinders were broken. The Company will thus suffer to the tune, in one week, of upwards of 100*l.*, independent of what I stated in my last! With regard to the repairs of the *Tamworth* engine, she had the whole of her tubes burnt out as well as several others. Mr. Kirtley ordered a number of old tubes to be selected, and had certain alterations completed under his own direction. An attempt was then made to fill the boiler with water, but it leaked faster than the tank could supply it. When Kirtley found this to be the case, he ordered all the brazed tubes which he had inserted to be taken out, and a perfect new set to be put in, and gave special directions to all, upon the pain of being discharged, not to communicate the same to me! I can assure Mr. M. K. that no one over whom he has any control has anything to do with my information.

One word as regards Trevethick's fitter, of whom I have already said so much. He was sent from Crewe on Monday last with two engines, the *Lynx* and *Basilisk*. Thence he was sent back at 8.15 with the *Hecate* and *Wizard*, a carriage truck, four waggons of coke, and a waggon of timber. The officials at Warrington made themselves sure that he would be able to run at mail-train speed, and get out of the way of the luggage-train, but in this they were disappointed, for when he had passed Preston Brook, where there is a rise of 1 in 100 for about 300 yards, he came to another rise of 1 in 300, to the top of which he should have gone, but from his want of skill he came to a stand. The waggons were parted from the dead engine to the sidings in the middle of that bank, leaving the waggons on the main line. On his return, it being dark, he forgot where he had left them, and coming up at full speed he pitched right into the first waggon, "smashed" it, and the tender of his engine, doubling up the foot-plate. From the concussion the other waggons were sent down the incline for about half a mile, blocking up the main line, and detaining the luggage train for about two hours. The engine was completely disabled. It was a miracle that the fireman escaped when the tender was shivered.

I have heard that when some favourite engines get out of order, and cause considerable expense, in order to blind the Directors the cost of repairs is divided amongst the others. Does Mr. Allen know who directed some of the spring balances to be cut, in order that the drivers might not know the extent of pressure the engine was running with?

With your permission, it is my intention in your opening number for the new year to take a retrospective view of the past, and the prospects of locomotive management for the future.

## LETTER XXIII.

Birmingham, January 2, 1844.

WHEN I addressed you on the 26th of December, 1842, for the first time, I could not help congratulating you upon the good you had effected to railway property generally up to that eventful period, but at the same time I remarked, that much had still to be effected. That, during the past year, your journal has exhibited an additional proof of your energy and zeal, no one will, I think, attempt to deny.

Previous to writing upon Locomotive Management, it was long a matter of surprise to me that no one had taken up the subject in detail; and what still more astonished me was, that Railway Directors were silent as to this important department; for it is an undeniable fact, that as soon as a railway came into action, the locomotive management was vested solely in the hands of one individual. Whether that individual were competent or not, did not matter, provided he was backed by influence; influence was a quite sufficient qualification. True it is that of those who have been entrusted with such important duties—important, both as regards the safety of the public and the care of expensive machinery—some have, by their talent, experience, and persevering attention, approached to perfection; and in proof of this statement, I deem it a duty to cite, from my own knowledge, a few of those instances where lines have been managed by experienced Superintendents, viz., the Liverpool and Manchester, London and Birmingham, Great Western, Midland Counties', Hull and Selby, Manchester and Leeds, &c. By particularly noticing those lines, I do not mean it to be understood that no accident of any kind has occurred in the locomotive department (for accidents of a fatal nature *have* occurred); but however lamentable such accidents have been, still not one of them could be attributed to the personal incompetence of the principal Superintendent, or to the appointment by him of inefficient and inexperienced drivers. The parties referred to have pursued an undeviating and prudent course, by employing those alone who have a thorough knowledge of their duty, never attempting a *pseudo*-economy at risk of life and destruction of property. In the above list I should have been most happy to place the Grand Junction, but during the course of the last twelve months the locomotive management of that line has been conducted in a way anything but satisfactory. That the enginemen upon that establishment are generally what Mr. Locke at the Crewe fete stated them to be there can be no doubt, for Mr. Locke has given various and most decisive proofs of this; but many are the objections that I might bring forward as to impolitic measures adopted by their (so-called) superiors. For instance, by "paltry economy" the Superintendents (you know they are numerous) have created much dissension and bad feeling betwixt the enginemen and firemen, and this bad feeling does still to a certain extent exist. I need not remind you there are not two sets of men between whom it is more absolutely necessary that the utmost harmony should

prevail than between the drivers and their firemen. Then, again, look at the conduct of Messrs. Trevethick and Allen, in retaining a fitter who has so repeatedly proved himself to be incompetent, thereby compromising the safety of the public and causing considerable pecuniary loss to the Company. I trust the Directors will take a useful lesson from the past, so that this railway may be ranked, twelve months hence, amongst the best managed lines in the kingdom.

A few words now as to the other incompetent Superintendents with whom I have for so many months been busied. The first of those who imprudently reduced the wages of drivers below what reason and sound judgment would dictate, and thereby caused properly qualified persons to leave the service, was Mr. Cabrey, of the York and North Midland Company. The most fulsome laudations have been heaped upon Mr. Cabrey, but to refresh your memory as to his real qualifications, please refer to my letters in your numbers of the 7th and 14th of October, and the 11th November. The next line on which unfortunately this example was followed was the North Midland, respecting which, though there has been much written, not only by you and by myself also, but by many other both in the daily and local papers, much more could very properly be said. The line is still misconducted, but a change will very soon take place. The Derby then partially followed, under the direction of Mr. M. Kirtley; and next the Birmingham and Gloucester, under Mr. M'Connell, by whose ill-judged reductions and other mismanagement no little damage was done to the Company's coffers, as I have on various occasions recorded in your pages. The Derby a second time followed the Gloucester, the particulars of which will be found by referring to your number of the 24th June. Subsequently, Mr. M. K. had certain alterations in contemplation, but, through your Editorial remarks, took wise advice, and abandoned his futile projects. I can assure you and your readers, from my own personal knowledge of the fact, that by your bold and straightforward conduct during the past year, you have, in this department alone, saved many thousands of pounds to railway shareholders. At the time I first made my remarks upon Mr. M'Connell, there was a combination among most of the Locomotive Superintendents to carry out the schemes of Mr. Cabrey, but having intimated in one of my letters that I proposed to lay before the public a true account of Mr. Cabrey's great achievements, a damper was cast upon their intention, and now that these achievements have been set forth, all further attempts are for the present given up. It is my intention, with your permission, to continue my strictures, and where amendment is seen, I shall be the first to commend.

What are the prospects of the future? As regards the amalgamation of the North Midland, Midland Counties', and Birmingham and Derby, the gain that will accrue to the pockets of the shareholders in the locomotive department alone will be very considerable. For instance, when the amalgamation is fully ratified and carried out, the locomotive establishments will be under one Superintendent, and it is earnestly to be hoped that past experience will ensure a judicious selection. The new Superintendent should be one who has proved himself thoroughly possessed of many combined qualifications, upon which I need not enlarge.

For the convenience of the public and the profit of the shareholders it is desirable that no time be lost. The regularity of the trains meeting one another will then be greater. The North Midland trains have of late been much behind, and numerous have been the special trains in consequence thereof, both on the Midland Counties' and the Derby; the luggage-trains have invariably been late. I dare say Mr. Bell, the Midland Counties' Secretary, would find it difficult to mention how often he has had occasion to complain of putting the luggage-trains on other lines to inconvenience. The amalgamation will also put an end to much bickering and bad feeling among officials. There will be fewer of them, and the engines will be better and more cheaply kept in repair. If these benefits are to be derived from the Midland amalgamation in one department alone, what must the great and ulterior advantages be, when a more general and extended amalgamation takes place throughout the kingdom! If it were not deviating from my usual course, I could point out the saving in other departments. At Derby there will be only one Secretary, and one office establishment, one luggage Superintendent, and one carriage and waggon repairing establishment, and one general Superintendent. A variety of other minor departments will likewise be acted upon in a similar manner.

In your Editorial remarks last week, you notice the very imperfect control the Board of Trade, as it is at present established, has over railways; and you very justly observe, that from a better constituted Board, much good might result. Sir Frederick Smith, while he held the office of Inspector, had views very different from those entertained by his successor and several members of the Board; and although I would not agree in all Sir Frederick's notions, still I must say, from my own knowledge of locomotive management, that his views were far superior, as regards the public safety, to those of General Pasley. The fatal results, and the numerous hair-breadth escapes which have taken place, under General Pasley's Inspectorship, on the London and Brighton, York and North Midland, North Midland, Birmingham and Gloucester, and Grand Junction lines, are for the most part on record, and it can be most distinctly proved, that under Sir Frederick Smith's system they never could have taken place.

General Pasley is perfectly aware that his existing powers literally amount to nothing—for defiance has been repeatedly given to the recommendations of the Board of Trade. His principle objection to Sir Frederick Smith's system was, that it interfered with the appointment of drivers by the Railway Companies, and also in a pecuniary point of view. These objections are very important, I allow; and to obviate them I took the liberty of pointing out a plan in my letter of the 7th February, by which all the objections of General Pasley were obviated, and, at the same time, all the advantages of Sir Frederick Smith's system obtained. General Pasley made but one objection to the plan I proposed, namely, that it would render necessary a great establishment. I requested him to reconsider my proposition, and he would at once see that no establishment above two individuals would be requisite, and these individuals would be directly under the existing Inspector General. My letter of March 21st, pointed out the benefits that would have arisen if such a

measure had been then in practice. Whatever plan may be ultimately proposed for the better protection of the public, I would, if it should require a great number of hands to work it, most decidedly object to it, if on no other grounds than that all great establishments are attended with complexity, and loaded with a number of heavily paid sinecures, which are obnoxious at all times to the public. I shall return to this subject.

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#### LETTER XXIV.

Birmingham, January 25, 1844.

IN your first number for this year, you requested your correspondents to "hold on" for a fortnight, that you might get up some of your arrears. This prevented me from fulfilling my promise of bringing forward the Chester and Birkenhead Railway in your second number. After surveying that line, I could almost have abandoned it, as being unworthy of occupying a place in your columns, had it not been that I pledged myself to your Birkenhead correspondent that I would bring it under review. It would seem that the Directors are of a very different opinion from mine, for they have establishments connected with its management which would almost be sufficient for lines of the first magnitude. It is only 15 miles long. At Chester the establishment cannot be found fault with, nor the individuals connected with it; at Birkenhead, anything but economy is to be found. There is a Secretary's office establishment, of which Mr. J. B. Wilcox is the head; a goods' management establishment, with Mr. John Roberts at the head; and besides these, there is an establishment at Liverpool. Should this extravagant management be continued, I shall give you a detailed account of all connected with it, and their salaries, and compare the extraordinary expense with the trifling income of this most insignificant of railways.

As respects the locomotive department, there is Mr. Alfred Yarrow, Superintending Engineer, and Mr. William Robison, Locomotive Superintendent. These gentlemen and their assistants have the extraordinary number of six engines, two regular enginemen, two firemen, two turners, and two cleaners to look after! Mr. Superintendent Robison is a *protege* of Mr. Allen of Crewe, and of course he must ape his patron's plans, however disastrous they may be to the public and his employers, by sending out men with engines who have neither practice nor knowledge of the road. He is one of those Superintendents who think that any one in the shape of a man is quite competent to be entrusted with the lives of the public. For instance, on the 25th December last, some time before 7 P. M., he sent out an engine with a train of empty carriages to Chester, by an inexperienced and unqualified person. This individual, Hazeldine-like, proceeded on with the train without a signal-lamp; nor had he prudence to take a tender-lamp. The mail-train followed him out at 7 o'clock, and rapidly came up to his, and had it not been for the experience and management of Dixon, the mail-train driver, dis-

astrous consequences would have ensued. In coming close upon the train the only signal Dixon had was the fire occasionally dropping from under the engine before him, and he was obliged to regulate his speed by the empty train in lead of him, thereby delaying the mail. Mr. Robison was the more culpable in this act, because a short time before he sent out a fitter of the name of Blackburn, with a passenger train, and when that person was about a mile from Mollington station he blew the whistle for the guard to put on the brakes, for he was totally ignorant on what part of the line he was! Under such mismanagement are the public not carried along at hap-hazard?

In my letter of the 2nd instant, by a slip of the pen, I entered the Manchester and Leeds Railway amongst those who were the best managed in their locomotive departments. It should have been the Manchester and Birmingham; for it is a notorious fact, that Mr. Fenton, Locomotive Superintendent of the Leeds line, is anything but a theoretical or practical Superintendent. It is a subject of much observation among those who are acquainted with this gentleman's acts, that the Directors could have all along overlooked his mismanagement, for otherwise they are as efficient, intelligent, and persevering a body of Directors as are to be found on any line. It has also been remarked by many, that if Mr. Fenton be so bad a Superintendent as I would represent him to be, "how is it that he keeps his locomotive expenditure under the majority of other lines?" This is easily solved. Neither the Directors nor the Locomotive Superintendent have any merit in this; for at the commencement that department had a duplicate perfectly complete of every expensive article which possibly could be required for a very considerable time to keep the engines in repair. Those duplicates are now exhausted, and the engines are in a very bad state of repair.

There are about thirty-three or thirty-four enginemen, and they are made to work from eighteen and nineteen to twenty-two hours per day, thereby becoming over-fatigued, so that fatal results have nearly occurred within the last fortnight. During this short period the trains have run into one another about half a dozen times, breaking engines, tenders, and waggons, to the extent of several hundreds of pounds. One of these "run-in's" was near the Summit tunnel, and was caused by a fitter of the name of Smith. The engine, tender, and several of the waggons were much damaged. He was once discharged before for a like offence, but it appears that this did not deter Mr. Fenton from trying him again. Another of the smashes I refer to was that which you copied from the *Manchester Courier*. Captain Laws took a special engine to inspect this break-down, as they were becoming so frequent. There have been two others since then. It is most surprising to me that a gentleman possessed of so many valuable qualities for the proper and safe management of a railway as Captain Laws is admitted to possess, should allow locomotive matters to go on in the present manner, and as has been the case for a considerable time.

There can be no difficulty in tracing these collisions and break-downs to the locomotive mismanagement, in making the engineman work so many hours, and having the engines in such bad condition. In proof of this the goods' engines on this line have 14 and 15-inch cylinders, and



it is not uncommon to see two of these (should-be-powerful) engines attached to a train of 24 waggons, and still have to be assisted up the inclines by the pilots! As further proof of the dilapidated state of these engines, I may mention that Mr. Fenton requires nine pilot enginemen to go in search of, and render assistance to, the manifold mishaps. There are other striking features of Mr. Fenton's impolicy. When an engine has run the distance from either end, it is not left in the charge of the engineman, as it ought to be, and as is so successfully practised on the London and Birmingham. The engineman no sooner steps off than another steps on, and returns with the engine at all hazards. When a goods' train man comes in, after being out not fewer than twenty hours, he must inquire before he goes away when he shall be wanted again, and he gets for answer, "I don't know; call again in an hour." This fatiguing and slavish system is resorted to because no confidence can be placed upon the safe return of the trains. On all well-regulated lines there is a notice put up in the engine shed every Saturday, pointing out to each engineman the hours that he has to be in attendance, and the trains he has to run during the ensuing week, which prevents many a misunderstanding between the Superintendent and his enginemen.

I must now refer to the lamentable accident that occurred on Tuesday evening, at fifteen minutes past seven, P.M., at Oakley station, on the Birmingham and Derby Railway, and which you noticed last week. What motive Mr. Kirtley could have for extending the platform on to the bridge, no one can tell; but whatever steps may be taken to amend the error, it will be a serious loss to the proprietors. It is allowed by all that such extension was perfectly unnecessary, for there has been no influx of passengers. If the Directors order the extension to be taken down, the material, and expense of erecting and taking down, will be so much extracted from the pockets of the shareholders; on the other hand, if an iron pallisading be ordered, both sides of the bridge must be uniform, and this additional outlay the dividends are ill able to bear. It is an incontrovertible fact, that since the alteration in the Direction, and in the Management, not a single act has been done on this line but has been fraught with evil and destructive consequences.

Not long ago, Mr. Sewell thought it necessary to put on a number of men to repair the permanent way, in terms of the contract, which runs thus:—"If the contractor shall at any time fail to fulfil the terms of the specification, to the satisfaction of Mr. Robert Stephenson, or the principal Engineer of the Company for the time being, the Company shall be at liberty to close the contract, on giving fourteen days' notice, or to employ so many workmen, and to provide such materials at the expense of the contractor, as may appear to Mr. Robert Stephenson, or the Engineer for the time being, to be necessary." When the contractor found that the Company's permanent way Inspector had so employed men, he complained to Mr. Kirtley, who took upon himself to write a sharp letter to Mr. Sewell, ordering him to take off the men, and dared him at his peril to interfere with the line without his order. Now, if Mr. Kirtley be so empowered by the Directors, Mr. Sewell should be discharged, and his salary given to this would-be principal Civil Engineer on the Derby. A very dangerous occurrence took place the

other day, in consequence of the negligence of the contractor, or his servants. It is expressly ordered, by all Railway Directors, that when the permanent way is under repair, there shall be a proper signal put up upon the line, at least 600 yards from the place under repair. This precaution was neglected, and the platelayers had only time to drop a loose rail when a train of passengers approached, at the usual speed, the engineman having no signal that the road was not perfect. Luckily the train *did* pass over, but it was a peradventure.

In your last week's number you have a correspondent "E. C. T.," who replies to Mr. Wall, of Sheffield, upon high velocities on railways. I differ with Mr. Wall in his first letter; I also differ with "E. C. T." to a certain extent. Mr. Wall holds out that great danger ensues when the trains are run occasionally, to make up lost time, at the rate of from fifty to sixty miles per hour. Now, I contend, that a train may be run on certain portions of any line at the rate of sixty miles per hour, if the machinery of the train be in perfect condition. Mr. Wall's plan of having a time-keeper on every train, independent of the Company, and with the power of directing the engineman, would be attended with the greatest of evils, which I am prepared to prove, independent of the enormous expense he would thereby create. Mr. Wall more particularly refers to the North Midland; but he, or any other person, need not be surprised at the accident in which he and others nearly lost their lives, for none of the machinery connected with that line at present is safe to run at a velocity of thirty miles per hour. The tyre of the wheel of the carriage he was in must have been split some time before the accident, and under this circumstance the same would have taken place at a velocity of twenty miles per hour. Mr. Wall must certainly allow, that if lost time were not made up between the stations, in nine cases out of ten the trains would not meet one another, under any regulation he might be able to suggest. For instance, if the speed of trains were at no time to exceed a certain limit, it is well known that in this country the weather is so variable that there might be fine weather on one line, and on another line at the same time it might be foggy weather, attended with rain; consequently the train ascending the inclines on the latter line would slip, and the consequence would be loss of time, and the engineman being restricted, the train would be half an hour or more behind, putting the passengers to inconvenience, and the Company to the expense of special trains. If such a measure as this were carried out, it would operate very materially against the public in the metropolis, where the stations are at such a distance from one another, and where one minute becomes of so much importance. It would cause many a passenger who might be ill able to afford it to remain in town all night, and whose delay perhaps would be his ruin—and all this inconvenience created without the least additional safety to the public. I perfectly agree with Mr. Wall that the guard should always be on the last carriage of the train. It is true that it seldom occurs that the last carriage of a passenger train is left behind, although it is not uncommon for the latter part of a luggage train to break loose. Suppose Mr. Wall's system of restriction to be carried into effect, it would be perfectly unnecessary to have an independent time-keeper to regulate the enginemen.

This could be done quite effectually by an order from the Directors to the engineman that he was not to run above a stated speed, and that he was not to make up any lost time under any circumstances whatever. There would be no risk of the engineman not complying with this order; it would matter little to him individually whether he were in time to meet another train or not. "E. C. T.'s" remarks upon velocity are, in my opinion, not altogether applicable to railway travelling. I perfectly agree with him that the greater the velocity in the event of coming in contact with sheep, cattle, or horses, the safer decidedly it is. He cites an occurrence in support of this, which took place on the Great Western, but he must not attribute it altogether to the velocity that the train was not thrown off the line when the three cattle were killed. I can state two reasons for it, which are quite obvious; first, the great weight of the engine, together with the velocity, coming in contact with a soft body; secondly, the great width of the gauge, by allowing sufficient room for the shattered bodies to lie betwixt the rails without coming in contact with the carriage wheels—if they had, from the lightness of the carriage, the train would inevitably have been thrown off the line. I shall convince him of this, from occurrences of the same kind on other lines. During the past year, on the Birmingham and Derby, it frequently happened that sheep strayed upon the line and were killed by the engine, without incommoding the engine or train, because when the engine ran over them, it turned the bodies of the sheep, and these being small, there was sufficient room for them betwixt the narrow gauge; but some short time ago a train was running at a rate of above forty miles per hour, when the engine came in contact with two horses. The engine's velocity and weight, as before mentioned, cut both horses in two, and still retained its position on the rails, but the gauge being narrow, there was not sufficient room betwixt the rails for the shattered bodies, so that immediately when the wheels of the carriage came in contact, the train was thrown off the line. I recollect an exactly similar occurrence having taken place on the London and Birmingham. On that line there was also another accident, which had a different effect, from the engine running at a less speed. The engine came in contact with a horse and the engine and train were both thrown off the line. This last circumstance corroborates "E. C. T.," that high velocities are the safest against soft substances; but against hard substances, such as he describes, being laid across one rail, the higher the velocity the greater would be the damage. Under these circumstances, it must be perfectly apparent that no fixed rule can possibly be laid down for an engineman as to how he should act. The incidents are so various that the precaution that might be used with success in one case might have most destructive effects in another. The best precaution that can be resorted to is, that all Directors should be very cautious whom they appoint as a Locomotive Superintendent, that he should be thoroughly proved fit for his important duties, and that this Superintendent, when he is appointed, should be as careful whom he selects as enginemen, that they should have much experience, and be perfectly acquainted with the line, and be able to judge for themselves what plan to resort to in all sudden cases of emergency, whether to accelerate the speed or lessen it.

The Directors of the Manchester and Leeds have become so alarmed at the imperfect and dangerous state of their locomotive department, from the frequent accidents of late, that they have thought proper to apply to the York and North Midland Directory to take this department under their care. Was ever anything so preposterous? I have repeatedly shown that the York and North Midland is fully as defective as the Leeds. From the late connection of the Manchester and Leeds Company and the Hull and Selby, would not the Directors of the latter Company be justified in stepping forward to remedy the defect in this important department? I am confident that, assisted by their intelligent Locomotive Superintendent, Mr. Gray, they would very soon put the management into a proper and safe state. Whence could assistance come better than from parties who are soon to be so closely identified with them? At all events, the shareholders should be up and doing, before the Directors get into a dilemma from which it will cause them much difficulty and expense to extricate themselves. I shall watch the further proceedings of the Leeds' Directory, and acquaint you therewith.

Mr. Trevethick has taken it into his head that he has put a stop to my writing, by imitating the frolics of Mr. M'Connell of Gloucester. If he does not think that I have sufficiently brought him before the public already, I can assure him I shall place him in bold relief.

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### LETTER XXV.

Birmingham, March 27, 1844.

IN my letter of the 5th September, I pointed out how the Chairman of the North Midland Railway had flattered the shareholders that they had effected a saving of considerably upwards of 11,000*l.* by reductions alone, to compensate for the loss they had sustained by the want of public confidence. I took the liberty of showing you that that saving was fallacious; instead of turning out a benefit, it became a decided loss to the Company—a loss they will never recover.

I shall endeavour to prove, from the statement at the last half-yearly meeting, that no improvement in the value of their locomotive stock has taken place, and that the locomotive repairs amount to within a trifle of the former half-year, and about 800*l.* more than the corresponding half-year under Mr. Marshall, who had the engines at that time in the best possible state of repair, whereas now they are in a most inefficient state, particularly the goods' engines, which still continue to do their work in a very unsatisfactory manner. They are seldom able to keep to time. Mr. T. Kirtley flattered himself that he had achieved a great exploit by having his gross locomotive expenditure about 50*l.* under that of Mr. Kearsley, of the Midland Counties', which line is much shorter. Many of your readers are not aware that the Midland Counties' engines run the same number of miles that the North Midland engines do. Those who are unacquainted with the working of the Midland Counties' line would not believe this upon looking into your traffic-return table, for

there they see the North Midland to be  $72\frac{1}{4}$  miles long, and the Midland Counties' only 57 miles.

I shall show them how it is that Mr. Kearsley's engines run an equal distance with Mr. T. Kirtley's, and under more disadvantageous and difficult circumstances. There are three distinct lines for the Midland Counties', and not one continuous route, as on the North Midland, namely,—

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| From Derby to Rugby . . . . .          | 50 miles.          |
| „ Derby to Nottingham . . . . .        | 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ „ |
| „ Nottingham to the Junction . . . . . | 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ „  |
|  | <hr/>              |
| Total . . . . .                        | 73 miles.          |
| Length of the North Midland . . . . .  | 72 $\frac{1}{4}$ „ |

$\frac{1}{4}$  mile in

favour of the North Midland.

Nor has Mr. T. Kirtley any merit in being 50*l.* under Mr. Kearsley, even if his engines were in the same perfect condition. The quantity of coke consumed on each line should be the same, or rather more on the Midland Counties', from the foregoing statement; but the actual value of the consumption becomes very different. The North Midland Company pays only from 11*s.* to 12*s.* per ton, while the Midland Counties' pays for the same article 16*s.* 9*d.* to 17*s.* per ton. Again, if you compare the repairs of the last half-year on both lines, you will observe that Mr. Kearsley's repairs are under those of Mr. Kirtley's by 700*l.*; but what then? Mr. Kearsley's whole stock of engines are in a more effective condition than when they came on the line, as I stated in a former letter; whereas the North Midland are in as dilapidated a state as any set of engines in the kingdom. It is allowed that the North Midland engines are of a construction that will stand more fatigue than most other engines when in proper repair; and it is further granted, that if the North Midland engines had been of the same construction as the Midland Counties', and under the superintendence of Mr. Kirtley, there would not, in three months after the ever memorable change, have been an engine on the line.

I am the more anxious that these remarks be put on record in your paper, because of the advantage taken by Mr. Hudson, in coaxing the Midland Counties' and Birmingham and Derby shareholders to embrace the North Midland in their amalgamation scheme at such an over percentage, and while the North Midland stock was in so dilapidated a state. When the amalgamation is ratified, and the caverns under the engine shed of the North Midland are explored, they will show in their true light the extraordinary practical engineering inventions of Mr. Thomas Kirtley, and also the perfect manner in which Mr. Peter Clarke's new ledger is kept, so that it would baffle the most astute of accountants to point out what quantity of stock has been used by Mr. Kirtley to advantageous purposes, and what quantity is hidden from the eye of the curious, available for nothing but the cupola and tilt-hammer. I confess, when I was for a few days in Derby the other week, I was as anxious to get a peep into this place of relics as ever antiquary was to explore the Pyramids of Egypt, but I need not inform you that I was

most strictly forbidden; and that even a watch was set over me, just as was done by his brother, Mr. Matthew Kirtley, at the Birmingham station. Nevertheless, I learned quite enough—more than I need for the present, and which shall appear as circumstances require. I have been in most of the repairing railway sheds in England, but this terror never appeared to me to exist anywhere else.

A system has been for some time in use on the Birmingham and Derby Railway, which affects the public in a very high degree, and calls for the particular attention of the Board of Trade. Mr. Matthew Kirtley has done away with the pilot-engine at the Birmingham station. Now a pilot-engine, everybody knows, is one of the most necessary appendages to a railway station.\* I shall just mention a recent occurrence (I could give several) in which the passengers were much alarmed, besides being delayed upon the line four hours, on a very cold damp winter night. The mail train leaves Derby at 11 p.m., and reaches Birmingham about 1.15 a.m. From some unknown cause the lead plug of the boiler fell out, and the water immediately escaped; the engineman had no alternative but to draw his fire out, and remain along with the anxious passengers until assistance came. *When* such assistance would arrive he could not tell the passengers, for he knew there was no pilot-engine ready at Birmingham, or any person at the station to get up the steam. After an hour had elapsed, without any mail-train arriving, an engineman and fireman had to be sent for, to get the steam up; and it is well known that this cannot be done under at least two hours, so that the passengers would have arrived just five or six hours behind time; but, fortunately, on this occasion there was an assistant engine which had been down to Derby, and which took the train on to Birmingham three hours behind time, just as a pilot-engine was getting ready to go out in search of it. Delay is not the only inconvenience the passengers have just reason to complain of. Suppose that an accident had occurred to any part of the train, what would have been the consequence if any individuals had been mutilated, and obliged to lie exposed for so many dark and inclement hours without assistance of any kind? Death, no doubt, would have been the result. Is it not the bounden duty of the Legislature to provide against any unthinking or unqualified Superintendent placing the public in such jeopardy, for no other reason than to make Directors believe he is an economising servant? Under such a system, where is the individual who, if he knew it, would put his person into a mail-train at Derby, if he had the means of stopping all night, and avoiding such risks?

There is another very important matter I would beg to bring under the notice of Mr. Gladstone. There has not yet been a properly constructed machine for the purpose of clearing away the snow from the rails. The greater proportion of the most qualified Locomotive Superintendents adopt the same plan as on the Hull and Selby, on the 4th ultimo, which led to several letters in your journal. When I was in that quarter the other week I made particular personal inquiry into the cause of that accident, and found that the observations of Mr. Wilson, the passenger, were substantially correct, those of a passenger

\* After this notice the pilot-engine was immediately put on again.

in a former letter not being so. It is true that sometimes a waggon is not able to clear the rails from snow, and that even a more dangerous plan has to be resorted to, by taking the engine behind the train and pushing it forward, though it is sometimes unable to get on even then. What else can be done when a fall of snow comes on unexpectedly? I know it to be true, that when any of these plans have to be adopted, the engineman has positive instructions to proceed with all possible caution. A premium should be offered for an effective machine, and when proved to be adequate for the purpose, all railways should be compelled to have it, at all times, on different portions of the line.

There is one point more I would also recommend to Mr. Gladstone's most serious consideration. It is an evil fraught with the most disastrous consequences, and has been denounced by most Boards of Directors,—I allude to the running the engine tender first. It requires no ingenuity to put a final stop to this. The Birmingham and Gloucester Company are obliged to resort to it from having no turn-table for an engine on the London station; and it is done on the Hull and Selby to a fearful extent. I dare say, Sir, you will recollect that about two years ago a very lamentable accident occurred on the Sheffield and Rotherham Railway, which made every one shudder that read of it. It was occasioned by running the tender first, and led to an order being given by many Boards, to avoid the practice; but there are many of the lines that cannot avoid it, from want of proper turn-tables being placed where the engine has to return again immediately. The celebrated Mr. Cabrey—to whom all Superintendents have repeatedly been requested to look up as the pink of perfection—cannot do otherwise than thus run most of his trains from Taylor's Junction to Selby, from want of a turn-table for the engine. Is it right that the public should be conveyed in such jeopardy, because a great Company cannot think of laying out a trifling sum for a proper table? I trust that this will not be overlooked.

In the concluding part of my last letter, I stated that I would exhibit Mr. Cabrey's abilities a little further, he having then commenced with his recommendations on the Brighton. The first important order he gave on the Brighton line, was to condemn several of the engines, because the tyres of the engine-wheels were not true. This order appeared very extraordinary to me, coming from that gentleman, he having several of his own engine-wheels in the worst possible condition, with flats and holes in the tyres, so much so, that from this cause the engine *Mercury* broke twenty rails in one day. Mr. Wright, the nephew of Mr. Cabrey, and Permanent Way Inspector, remarked that the enginemen did not know the danger they were in, otherwise they would not run so fast.

My letter is getting to too great a length, otherwise I meant to enter upon a consideration of Mr. Cabrey's talents, and the improved dimensions of the *Princess* and *Mercury*, and the turn-tables at Selby, the lengthening of the *Zetland*, his civil engineering of the "*Jetty*" on the River Ouse, at Selby, &c. &c., but I cannot allow myself to omit the following specimen of practical locomotive engineering. I consider it a duty due to his brethren in the profession, many of whom are well

known to be far superior in point of talent, notwithstanding the pertinacity of Mr. Hudson and Sir John Simpson in holding him forth to the locomotive world as the "*superior of them all*." When these "Yorkers" leased the Leeds and Selby, there was an engine nearly new (the *Firefly*), a very excellent coupled goods' engine. Mr. Cabrey sent her to Leeds, got her uncoupled, and made for a train-engine at considerable expense—a most unjustifiable step, which will appear from his own doings as I proceed. A considerable time after this he got a repairing-shop erected and a quantity of superior tools, at a very great expense; and to show that his talents would compensate for this large outlay, he thought he could not do better than take this same engine (the *Firefly*), and re-construct her into a coupled engine again, although she did her work exceedingly well, both before and after the alteration at Leeds. He ordered a new crank axle to be made of certain dimensions. The axle arrived, and when being fitted on the engine, he found that he had ordered it too long. He appeared to have no alternative but to order the inside frame to be reduced, to admit of it to work clear. This being done, the engine was completed and brought out for trial, but, alas! the unlucky crank-axle still caught the frame, and down it came, bringing along with it all the working machinery! Such *talent* as this, Sir John, I dare say, would never think of exposing to his colleagues at the Brighton Board. It appears very plain to me, that Mr. Hudson and Sir John would be very glad to get rid of Mr. Cabrey to any Company, at whatever sacrifice.

Before I conclude, I would beg to whisper a quiet word to the Mr. Wright above referred to. For the future, let him not step out of his way to take the *speck* out of his neighbour's eye, before he takes the *beam* out of his own. At the same time, I would recommend him to be contented where he is, and give up all hopes of following his uncle, to be Permanent Way Inspector on the Brighton. Sufficient has been set forth to show that Mr. Cabrey will never be commander-in-chief on that line, maugre the disinterested intercession of Sir John.

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## LETTER XXVI.

Birmingham, April 10, 1844.

So deplorable an accident, as that to which I have now to refer, would never have occurred had the imprudent reduction of the tunnel policemen not been persisted in, which I pointed out in my letter of the 21st March, 1843; nor would the collision have taken place, which I noticed in my letter of the 25th July of the same year.

Before I enter upon the particulars of this accident, allow me, in order to refresh the memory of your readers, to quote two paragraphs from those letters, which will convince them that what I then advanced and predicted, was, in the first instance, verified to a certain extent, on the 25th July following, and most woefully and literally by what occurred on the afternoon of the 30th March last.



Extract from my letter of the 21st March, 1843 :—

"At Clay Cross tunnel, close by the north end of it, Mr. Stephenson's Coal Railway joins, from which the coal trains get upon the North Midland Railway, and immediately proceed through the tunnel. Formerly there were two watchmen by day, and two by night; and at the other end there was one watchman by day, and one by night; and with this number it not unfrequently happened, that, with all their vigilance and care, it was with difficulty they could prevent accident. The above efficient number is now reduced to one watchman by day and another by night, for both ends of the tunnel! I do not know a place upon any railway which requires more vigilance and attention than this particular spot. This tunnel is one and a quarter miles long, and rises from the north end of it sixteen feet per mile; it is uncommonly wet; the rails are always in a slippery condition, so much so, that when a coal train is heavy, the fireman is obliged to have recourse to that frightful risk of standing upon the buffer-bar of the engine, and continuing to throw sand upon the rails all the way through, to make the wheels of the engine adhere to the rails; and it is no uncommon occurrence, that with all this a train comes to a dead stand. Suppose a heavy coal train enters the tunnel, and does come to a stand-still, and the watchman's attention is taken up at the other end, the tunnel becomes filled with steam, a passenger-train follows, and no signal being given that the tunnel is blocked up (no person being there to give it), the train enters with its accustomed speed—and need I depict to you the awful consequences? The collision takes place, and what could the more fortunate passenger do, who might not be killed under such an excitement, and in a tunnel filled with fire, steam, darkness, destruction, and screams of the most horrid description? It would be next to a miracle if even a single soul were saved to relate the sad event. Is it not the bounden duty of the Directors to take every possible means in their power to increase vigilance at such an important point to prevent such a scene occurring? The misfortune is, the law, as it at present stands; if such a disaster were to take place, the Directors would go scathless."

Extract from my letter of the 25th July last :—

"A special train was required from Derby to Leeds, at 9.40 A. M., engine No. 30. On reaching the north end of Clay Cross tunnel, there was an engine employed shifting a coal train, and no signal being given to the passenger-train previous to entering the tunnel, or on leaving it, the engine coming out at full speed, pitched right into the coal-train, rendering the engine useless, and smashing a number of the waggons, several to such an extent as to render it impossible to repair them. Had the coal-train pitched into the passenger-train, it is likely that scarcely a passenger would have been saved. This is one of Mr. Cabrey's recommendations. If life had been lost, the old song would have been revived, that the Directors were sorry for the occurrence, and the men who had caused it were discharged. This is the consolation to the bereaved relations! Nothing must be hinted as to imprudent reductions."

I shall now notice the unfortunate affair that took place on Saturday, the 30th March, about three P. M. Since the imprudent reduction of the police at both ends of the Clay Cross tunnel, in order to avoid accident from want of watchmen the mineral-train is ordered to be divided, and taken through the tunnel at twice, to ensure its not coming to a stand still. On the day stated above, the train was taken through entire, but when it had nearly arrived at the south end of the tunnel, the way-bar shaft broke, and, of course, the engine could proceed no further. The engineman (Lewis) went under the engine to unconnect the disabled engine. Before doing this, he sent the brakesman back to apprise the policeman not to allow the passenger-train (which was due) to enter the tunnel until it was clear; but the policeman not being at hit post to observe the brakesman's signal, the passenger-train entered the tunnel, passed the brakesman, and pitched into the mineral-train. By the concussion the mineral-train was driven forward, and the wheel of

the engine took off the foot of the engineman a little above the ankle, and passing obliquely up the leg, shattered his thigh in a most dreadful state, and passing over the other leg above the knee, separated it from the body. While this was going on, figure the alarmed state the passengers must have been in! The poor man was, with all possible care, taken to the Derby Infirmary, where death ended his sufferings at about 10 o'clock the same evening. Can you, Sir, or the public, read this narration without being of the same opinion as myself, that this fatal accident was caused by *pseudo-economy* and imprudent management? Besides the duty the policeman has to perform at the north end of the tunnel, he has to take money from the passengers, and visit the Clay Cross station occasionally, leaving the tunnel to take care of itself; and it was so in this unfortunate instance.

The inquiry before the Coroner was, in my opinion, anything but fair and impartial. All the principal officers of the Company were allowed to be present at the examination of their inferiors, thereby intimidating them; these officers were Messrs. Peter Clarke, Swanwick, T. Kirtley, Greaves, and Marlow the locomotive foreman. The jury very properly twice objected to those gentlemen being present longer than the time occupied by them in giving their evidence, but the Coroner overruled the objections, and, as a matter of course, they had the evidence all their own way—Mr. Peter Clarke pointing out to Mr. Kirtley whom to bring forward, and Mr. Kirtley, having the Testament in his hand, gave it to the witnesses, and put the questions to them. The fireman of the mineral train was called, and stated that he apprised Lewis, the engineman, that the passenger train was approaching. He was asked if Lewis answered him; he replied in the negative; but on being cross-examined, he stated that he did answer him. This admission was seized upon immediately, and a verdict applied for to the effect, "that the deceased came by his death from accident, caused by his own neglect." The jury would not agree to this. One of them insisted that the question should be again put, when the witness distinctly stated a second time that Lewis did *not* answer him.

Mr. Kirtley and Mr. Marlow came forward (Marlow producing the broken way-bar), and affirmed that the bar broke through the neglect of the deceased or his fireman, in not having it sufficiently oiled; which, of course, was listened to by the jury. Had they been acquainted with the machinery of a locomotive engine, they would have put both those gentlemen to a stand. I would ask Mr. T. Kirtley if, when he was an engineman, or during the whole course of his practice, he ever knew or heard of a way-bar shaft being so overheated that it would break from want of oil, particularly a shaft of the description used on the North Midland. I affirm *not*, and would confidently appeal to any competent Locomotive Superintendent in England. If you consider the nature of the motion of the way-bar shaft, you will see that it is absolutely impossible for it to overheat. It does not revolve, it only travels to and fro about half an inch on its bearing; and I further maintain, without fear of contradiction, that a way-bar like that which caused the accident after being in use for but a short time, would not have become heated in twelve months to the degree represented by Mr. Kirtley and his fore-

man, although it had not been oiled above half a dozen times during that period. I allow it might have been considerably indented and worn, but then it was the imperative duty of either Mr. Kirtley or his foreman to have examined regularly all the machinery which is committed to their care. They are placed in their situations for no other purpose, and this accident bears me fully out in all my former allegations, that the greater part of the machinery connected with the engines of the North Midland Railway is not in a perfect and safe condition. I repeat, that it was perfectly preposterous for Mr. Kirtley to advance before the jury that the shaft broke from want of oil.

Mr. Marlow also was very inconsistent in his evidence. It was he who brought Lewis forward as an engineman from the Birmingham and Derby line to the North Midland, and always held him forth to be a very attentive man, equal to any he had on the line. Now, however, that the poor man has lost his life from the mismanagement of his superiors, Mr. Marlow steps forward and pronounces Lewis, his own *protege*, to be careless and neglectful!

The policeman was next called, and stated, that instead of being on duty at the tunnel end, he was at the Clay Cross station, when the passenger train passed him, and of course he could not be aware of the misfortune in the tunnel, or that it was blocked up. The station is nearly a quarter of a mile distant from the tunnel. He had received money from a passenger, and had gone to the station with it. It is a common practice for him to visit the station, but in this particular instance he did not prove that he was obliged to be there at that time; consequently the whole blame of the disaster was saddled on him, and a verdict was returned, "That the deceased came to his death by the neglect of the policeman," and a deodand of £. was imposed on the engine. From the manner in which the whole inquiry was conducted, it was impossible for the jury to censure the Directors for imprudently reducing the number of policemen at so important a situation.

General Pasley visited Clay Cross tunnel on the Monday afternoon after the accident, accompanied by Messrs. Clarke, Swanwick, and Kirtley, but what does this avail? As on a former fatal occasion, the General, doubtless, heard the regrets of the Directors and officials, and there the matter drops!

It is fortunate that I have not to record, at the same time, a fatal accident on the Birmingham and Derby Railway. It would appear that nothing, however flagrant or dangerous, will lead to Mr. Matthew Kirtley's amendment. Three weeks ago, on the arrival of the goods'-train at Birmingham from Derby, betwixt three and four p.m., when the engine was returning from the lugga-ge-yard to the engine-shed on the main line, and when in the act of crossing, out comes Mr. Kirtley's foreman on an engine, without any signal whatever, and pitches right into the goods'-engine, driving her off the line, straining her axles, and otherwise damaging both engines, and nearly causing the loss of life. I have repeatedly pointed out similar imprudent acts on various lines, and observed that if the same thing were done by an engineman he would be discharged instantly; but it seems that railway officials of a higher grade can do no wrong, whatever disastrous consequences may

ensue. I would suggest to Mr. Kirtley not to build too much on the fulsome laudations of the Directors in their last Report, for they were given only to cover the total failure of the alteration in the Board.

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## LETTER XXVII.

Birmingham, May 8, 1844.

IN the communication to which you did me the favour to allude last Saturday, I referred to the bad treatment which a number of passengers had received on the previous Wednesday evening on their arrival from Chester at Crewe. What made their detention the more extraordinary was, that the train they came by was not a special train from Chester races, the same as the succeeding one for which the parties at the station were not prepared, but one of the regular passenger trains, which meets the Liverpool train at Crewe station at 7.8 P.M. Upon the arrival of the latter train they did not attach the Chester train, and when the passengers understood that they were left behind, can it be wondered that considerable irritation should arise? They were very unceremoniously informed that they must wait for the next train, which would arrive at 10.15 P.M. The officials treated them in the most arbitrary manner. Application was made to allow them to resort to the Crewe Tavern, to pass away so long a time, and be apprised when a train came up, but in reply, they were told not to leave their places in the carriages, and that if they did, from the situation in which the train was placed on the rails, in the event of another train unexpectedly coming up they would do so at the risk of their lives. This certainly was no very agreeable predicament for passengers to be in, unacquainted with the station and in the dusk. As a matter of course, the murmuring increased, the most influential of the passengers retiring to the office and entering the leading facts in the complaint-book, and subscribing their names. A number of them, more irritated than the rest, were with considerable difficulty prevented from committing violence on the station, threatening to pull up the rails and do other damage; and there is not the least doubt that such would have been the case had not the special train from Chester arrived with two engines, when the power was divided for Birmingham. This proceeding certainly does Messrs. Trevithick and Allen credit for their locomotive management at such an extensive establishment as Crewe, only equalled at Wolverton on the Birmingham, and Swindon on the Great Western line! An instance of such gross mismanagement never yet occurred at either of those latter stations, where there is a greater amount of traffic and fewer lieutenants and sergeants; nor is such likely to take place under the present locomotive superintendencies.

I have had letters from gentlemen at a distance, who were passengers on the occasion referred to, and who had subscribed their names to the complaint. One remarks that several of them were prepared to go into a subscription to prosecute the Company for the unwarrantable delay. Another observes, that if such an occurrence had taken place on the old

coach-road system, from want of a sufficiency of horse-power, the proprietors would have been brought to their senses by the disappointed passengers calling in the aid of post-chaises, and regrets that individuals have apparently no alternative now-a-days but quietly to submit to whatever usage they may receive on railways; and that as to "law," it is ridiculous to think of *that* against a Company possessed of millions. A third states, that he felt obliged to you for the exposure, as it might be the means of preventing a recurrence of the grievance, and that this was the third time he had been similarly treated on railways. Such conduct cannot be too loudly denounced, and I cannot allow myself to believe that the Grand Junction Directors would sanction such treatment of their patrons.

My astonishment was considerably excited on reading in your number of last week the circular sent to the several Railway Boards by the Board of Trade, in reference to a document drawn up by Major-General Pasley, Inspector-General of Railways. No one can read that letter without amazement. It is the most extraordinary that ever emanated from a Government officer, for though on a subject which involves the safety of the public so much, it passes over, with the greatest coolness imaginable, the many hair-breadth escapes that passengers have experienced within the last thirteen months—the period specially mentioned by General Pasley.

Having taken a deep interest in railway locomotive management for the last eighteen months, and pointed out a variety of instances in which proper and safe arrangements in that important department have not been resorted to, I hope, with your usual indulgence, you will allow me a small space to take a slight review of the circular above referred to.

In the first paragraph, General Pasley states, that it had been his duty to inquire into two fatal accidents which had occurred in the space of thirteen months, in both of which one railway train, detained by accident beyond its proper time, was run into by another train, causing the death of a passenger in one case, and an engine-driver in the other; and notwithstanding that the usual precaution had been taken, of sending a man back from the train, in both cases the precaution proved ineffectual. In the case of the passenger who lost his life, it appears the General does not remember that it did not arise from want of precaution in giving the proper signals, but that it was caused by the absolute recklessness and incompetence of the driver. The man himself allowed this, for he *pleaded guilty* to a charge of manslaughter, though, in truth, the whole blame of that lamentable catastrophe ought to have been placed to the imprudence of the Directors, in making so sweeping a change, and placing men in charge of engines who never ought to have had such responsibility put into their hands. With reference to the driver who caused the accident, I can give a detailed account of his history on railways—an inquiry into any part of which would at once have shown that he never was possessed of sufficient practice, not having been a driver before, and he himself declared, before he took this charge, that he was totally unfit for it. What was still more extraordinary was, that at this very time the Directors and Superintendents maintained that the men they then employed were as efficient as any set of men in the kingdom,

while at that date they were continually discharging them for incompetence. Nay, up to the present time we have evident proofs that with all the practice they have had since the memorable change, the staff of enginemen is scarcely more efficient than before. For example, take the case of the engineman who lost his life on the afternoon of the 29th March last, in Clay Cross tunnel. Both his masters declared, before the inquest, that the man lost his life from his own incapacity and carelessness. What occurred on the North Midland line, on Sunday, the 29th April, is another proof that there are still persons employed who are incompetent, for when a pin of one of the pistons became loose, which prevented it from working, and the engine stopped, the driver did not know what to do, till Mr. Stephenson, of Derby, who was in the train, suggested to him to try the valves of the engines, and see which engine was disabled, for the purpose of disconnecting it. How to do this he did not know, when luckily out stepped an engine-fitter, who was accidentally in the train, to render him assistance. The opinion of the fitter the engineman disregarded, and acting on his own, he disconnected the perfect engine, and of course there he was at a stand still! This engine had to be connected again, and then the other unconnected, before the train could proceed, thereby detaining the mail-train and passengers between two and three hours, from sheer incapacity. An experienced engineman would have been able to go on in about fifteen minutes, without causing any alarm whatever among the passengers.

From the whole tenor of the first paragraph, it evidently appears that General Pasley deems it perfectly unnecessary to make any inquiry into the locomotive management of railways, except when life is sacrificed. Have I not, during the period to which he adverts, pointed out more than six collisions, which caused much destruction of property and almost loss of life occasioned by recklessness and imprudence, on the North Midland, in which opinion the Directors supported me, by the discharge of one of the offenders? During the same space of time have I not shown as many instances of hair-breadth escapes on the Grand Junction, Birmingham and Gloucester, Birmingham and Derby, and the Chester and Birkenhead, and forsooth, because no life was sacrificed, the Government officer deems it no part of his duty to make inquiry into the existing management, or insist upon an amendment, to prevent a recurrence of the evil!

To return to the case of the engineman killed in Clay Cross tunnel, and the "ingenious arrangement adopted on the London and Birmingham Railway, as a fog or danger signal," noticed in the second paragraph of the General's report, it would appear as if when General Pasley penned the circular he had never given it a thought, that if even "this ingenious fog arrangement," as he styles it, had been in use on the North Midland Railway, it would not have prevented the two fatal accidents above alluded to, particularly that in the tunnel, and for this reason:—Suppose the policeman, or tunnel watchman, had been in possession of a hundred of those tin boxes, containing charges of gunpowder, how could he have applied them to the rails before the train entered the tunnel? He was a quarter of a mile distant from his post when the train passed him, and knew nothing of what had occurred in the tunnel.

He was attending to another part of his duty, delivering up passenger-money to the clerk at Clay Cross tunnel station—a duty which ought never to have been imposed on him. The real cause of the driver losing his life was, that there is not a sufficient number of men at that important place. It is not long since a passenger-train run into a mineral-train, at this very spot, but no life being lost, the occurrence was, as a matter of course, looked over.

It must be very surprising to many of your readers, as it is to myself, that General Pasley should have passed over so silently the condition of locomotive stock. His inquiries must have been made in a very partial quarter, or have been very superficial, for he seems rather to sanction reductions and encroachments on the public safety, in his official capacity as Inspector-General. The only recommendation which is the fruit of his eighteen months' experience, is to propose to Railway Directors (he has no power to compel them) to put in possession of the policemen a number of those exploding tin boxes, to be used by them at discretion! In nineteen cases out of twenty which have occurred during the last eighteen months, in which dangerous collisions have taken place, these boxes could not by any possible means have been rendered available. This I am prepared to prove; and as to the bringing into practice such a dangerous combustible on railways, I very much question the propriety of the plan.

If General Pasley had, instead of this tin-box system, recommended to the Board of Trade to apply for more extended powers, so as to be able actually to *prevent* imprudent measures being resorted to, the public would not be jeopardised as it has been on several lines which have come under my review. In place of this, however, he simply gives his sanction to the use of gunpowder to be placed in many hands, that a Railway Company may be saved a few pounds by reducing an effective, safe, and judicious staff of policemen, and employing incompetent enginemen, as has been so long proved to be the case on the North Midland and other lines. Military or naval gentlemen (a community with which railways swarm) may not be alarmed at a gunpowder explosion, but female passengers, and even not a few male, would not fancy the fragments of a tin box paying them a visit in a carriage. I would recommend to General Pasley and the Board of Trade to reconsider this important matter.

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### LETTER XXVIII.

Birmingham, July 2, 1844.

I AM not the least surprised at your having a correspondent like "C. E." who wishes to have recourse again to the parsimonious and dangerous expedient of reducing the wages of that important and useful class of persons, *enginemen*; for I know it to be a fact that it is in the contemplation of a Locomotive Superintendent (to whose imprudence I have had frequent occasion to refer) to make another attempt at reduction this year, although he knows from experience the loss which the Company sustained under

his last reduction, besides putting the lives of the public in jeopardy. The party referred to was in Liverpool in the early part of last week, but whether he be connected with your Liverpool correspondent, "C. E.," I cannot tell, though some of my friends say they can trace the correspondent to be a very *small Civil Engineer* indeed, and this may be, for the term "Civil Engineer" is now becoming almost a by-word.

With respect to the merits of the question raised by "C. E." as to the reduction of the enginemen's wages, it plainly appears, from your correspondent's communication, that he is totally unacquainted with the practical duties of a locomotive engineman in the working of that important department. His arguments appears to be based solely upon the Companies' time-tables. In his first letter, he complains that I have not stated what I would wish the maximum pay to be. Now, I consider such an opinion would be utterly useless, for matters like this generally find their own level, according to the relative amount of duty performed on the different lines.

Taking the lines in the same order as your correspondent (although it would have mattered little to me if he had referred to the whole number of railways), he asserts that the enginemen on the Liverpool and Manchester actually work under five hours per day, for which they receive 7s. Now, I flatly deny this assertion. The average time for the duty of an engineman on that line is above eight hours per day, and in some cases twelve hours. "C. E." appears not to know that an engineman must be at his post one hour before the time he starts, to examine the machinery of the engines, to see that his steam is properly up, and a sufficient supply of water in the tender. He also appears not to know, that although an engineman is not running, he is otherwise necessarily employed, and must always be in attendance.

He next takes the Grand Junction Railway, with the working of which he manifestly is less acquainted than with the former, particularly when he says that during the whole week the men average only five hours' work, for which they are paid 7s. In most cases, when they run the trains, they are on duty above twelve or thirteen hours, and on the day when they do not run, instead of, as he says, stopping at home, the men must on that day be as regularly at the shed, and as beneficially employed as any fitter. The time they are on duty is far beyond that of any fitter. Besides, if a fitter be employed on a Sunday, he is allowed "time and half" for that day, but when it becomes the engineman's turn to run the trains on the Sunday, he is on duty above thirteen hours, and receives no additional wages for his Sunday work; on the contrary, he is rather punished, for when his Sunday turn comes he is compelled to play on a week-day in lieu of it. This, I think, can hardly be considered fair play. When the alteration took place on the Grand Junction line, it caused much discontent. Remonstrances, you will remember, were sent to the Board of Directors and to Mr. Trevelthick, which remonstrances were referred to Mr. Locke; but I suppose, from the multiplicity of business that gentleman has always on hand, he has overlooked them. I trust his attention will again be called to the subject, for I do not believe that such a practice is in accordance



with the general tenor of his policy, nor do I know of any other line on which the men are thus treated.\* Again, an engineman's time is principally spent from home, and this increases his expenditure in living; if a fitter is sent from home on duty, he receives board-wages for the time,

"C. E." last alludes to the London and Birmingham. The duties of enginemen on that line are something similar to those of the Liverpool and Manchester, running every day, and being actively employed. Your correspondent has selected the fastest train on the line, but there are many of the trains which keep the men as long on duty as on any other line. I can assure him there is not much play-time allowed on this line. More than any other, the arrangements are such as to prevent this; but it would waste my time and your space to enter into all the particulars.

Independent of the enginemen being obliged to do other work than running, and to say nothing of the long hours they are on duty, the number of miles they run in a year in all sorts of weather, injuring their constitution, must, I think, show every one that 7*s.* per day are quite little enough. On the Liverpool and Manchester, they run in a year 38,688 miles; on the Grand Junction, 30,576; on the London and Birmingham, by the train "C. E." has selected, 43,680; and this is independent of running pilot and extra trains. Nor is this all. Let your correspondent consider the weather the engineman is exposed to in running during the night, the expense he is liable to for doctors and extra clothing, above those of ordinary workmen; let him reflect on the other casualties attending the occupation, and he will find that, when he abstracts the expenses attending these from the 7*s.*, an engineman has actually less pay than a fitter. Pinch the enginemen down to starvation point, as "C. E." would seem to desire, and, in the course of two or three years, where would there be found a body of men so respectable as enginemen are now admitted to be?

As your correspondent is fond of comparisons, allow me to make one or two. Suppose we have two railways running parallel. The one shall be conducted in a similar manner as Mr. Bury conducts the London and Birmingham; the other shall be conducted in a similar manner to that of the North Midland, which is still under the rule of Mr. Cabrey. The former shall be 1*s.* higher in the fare than the latter; and I would put it to the public, nay, to "C. E." himself, if, when a person arrived at the station, the question were asked, "Will you go by the high-fare train, conducted by long-practised and experienced enginemen, or will you go by the low-fare train, conducted by inexperienced enginemen?" which line would be selected. I should say that the passenger would be poor indeed who would risk his life under the North Midland system, when he could be conveyed with safety and comfort under the other system, although at an extra charge.

Again, let us compare the loss of life, hair-breadth escapes, and destruction of property, which have taken place on those lines where inexperienced men have been employed, with the working of the lines where

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\* Shortly after this the "play-day" was done away with.

there has been no deviation from the prudent course. With reference to the former, remember the fatal results on the London and Brighton and North Midland, the narrow escapes on the York and North Midland, Leeds and Selby, Manchester and Leeds, Birmingham and Gloucester, Birmingham and Derby, Chester and Birkenhead, and the Grand Junction, all of which stand upon record ; while in no instance is there upon record (during the same period) loss of life or destruction of property, from imprudence, on the London and Birmingham, Great Western, Liverpool and Manchester, Midland Counties', and Hull and Selby Railways. These latter lines are under the special management of a Bury, a Gooch, a Wood, a Deurance, a Kearsley (till lately), and a Gray. This comparison, I think, would have been quite a sufficient reply to "C. E.s" proposed reduction, and I am of opinion, that I have advanced now enough to make your correspondent "C. E." pause in bringing forward any measure of reducing wages, when it has been so fatally and expensively proved that all such notions have tended to ruinous consequences.

While upon this important subject, I cannot allow the opportunity to pass without making a remark upon the evidence given by Mr. Swift, Solicitor of the Grand Junction Company, before the Select Committee on Railways. It is strange to me to read such evidence, coming from a gentleman in his position, in matters concerning the management of railways, when the important events of the day appear to have been passed over by him unnoticed. To be as brief as possible, I shall take only one question and answer, which embodies the substance of his evidence. Sir J. Easthope asks—"Did you ever hear of a case in which the recommendation of the Board of Trade failed of producing an alteration?" Mr. Swift answered—"No ; but I can conceive the possibility of a case where the Board of Trade might recommend something injudicious, or which was unwise to do." When Mr. Swift spoke thus, did he not know that when Mr. Laing issued an admirable circular to all the Railway Boards, on the 27th of January, last year, the Managers of those lines for which it was particularly intended, totally disregarded it, both in the reduction of the enginemen and the police, life being lost in consequence of such reduction? Did he not know that this has particularly occurred on the North Midland? Was it not also disregarded on the Gloucester, and on the Grand Junction line, with which he is connected? Was it not disregarded by Messrs. Trevethick and Allen, until reductions were finally put a stop to by Mr. Norris? I could state many more instances, if necessary. I know of no instance where that advice was adhered to but on the Hull and Selby. From the first hint given by General Pasley, that Board, after the North Midland disaster, retracted what they had partially begun, and up to to this time have had no cause to regret following the advice given.

Mr. Glyn, Chairman of the London and Birmingham Railway, also gave evidence, but of a character very opposite to that of Mr. Swift. He readily granted, from his own knowledge and experience, that it would be a decided improvement if the Board of Trade were invested with imperative powers ; but at the same time he was aware that such powers would never require to be put in operation against lines managed

in the same prudent manner as the one of which he is at the head, or any of the others which I have above noticed in connection with the Birmingham. We, however, have no security that those lines will always be managed so. The present Boards must change, and the present Superintendents must pass away; and therefore it seems to me necessary that the Board of Trade, for the time being, should be possessed of the absolute power to prevent, for the future, any Directory or Superintendent having it in their or his power to hazard the lives of the public, from any whim of fancied economy.

It must be gratifying to the public to know that Mr. Gladstone, in his Railway Bill, has introduced a clause to obtain more extensive powers for the Board of Trade in this respect. It appears there are other clauses which are likely to meet with much opposition. Whatever may be the ultimate fate of those clauses, it will be of little consequence that the discussion of them should stand over for another year; but much evil will inevitably result if the extended powers to the Board of Trade be withheld for another Session. It is to be hoped that Mr. Gladstone will not relinquish this part of his Bill.\*

In advocating imperative powers to be granted to the Board of Trade, it is not for the purpose of increasing their patronage, or creating sinecures. By doing this the cure would become worse than the disease. In a letter I addressed to you on the 7th February, 1843, I explained my views on this head. Since then I have seen nothing which has caused me to change my opinion as to the possibility of rendering one additional officer, under the Inspector-General, sufficient for all useful purposes. In addition to what I then stated, I would now desire to say that, whenever he inspected a line, it should be imperative on him to *walk* over a portion of that line, betwixt some two of the stations, and if he found it defective there, to continue walking on until he was satisfied; and also that the subordinate officer should walk over every new line previous to its being viewed by the Inspector-General, so that he might be enabled to report upon it minutely. I am desirous to impress upon General Pasley, that if this plan were adopted, it need not otherwise increase the department, though last year the General stated to me that he thought it would involve a large additional establishment. In order more fully to elucidate my plan, I may compare the duties of a traveller connected with a great mercantile establishment to those of the officer I propose to create. The mercantile traveller visits every town, calls upon many customers in each, twice within the year, and, in many establishments, three times within the year, nor has there ever been any difficulty in finding individuals to accomplish this for many years without intermission. Should a dispute arise as to any of the accounts, the head book-keeper of the concern makes all the necessary inquiry, and explains to the active partners, and then the matter is put to rest. The Board of Trade officer's duty would not be very materially different. He would not have so many stations to call at as the traveller has towns, to say nothing of the numerous individuals in each town, and the surplus time he would have over the traveller might be

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\* He afterwards retracted this.

devoted to walking over the certain portions of each line before-mentioned, to inspect the permanent way minutely. Should any cause of complaint appear, it would then be the duty of the Inspector-General to visit the same place, and if *he* found his assistant's report correct, he would place the matter before the Board for them to consider and decide upon. The arrangements once commenced would go on smoothly, for there would not be the smallest risk of the general Inspector's inferior officer not doing his duty, as he might be called upon to keep a diary, in which would be recorded every mile he travelled, and every foot he walked, together with the substance of the conversations he had held upon the business that was committed to his charge; and upon his periodical return to London, this diary might be transcribed for the future reference of the Board. By such an arrangement, the Board of Trade would at all times be in possession of all the proceedings of all the railways in the country, just as perfectly as the active partners of a mercantile establishment are acquainted with the position of their customers throughout the kingdom.

The duties of a Government officer should be upon the same footing as any other business; it is not necessary that because he is employed by the Government he should be freed from walking. The labour I put upon him may appear great, but it could not be fatiguing in practice. The transit by railway is quick and easy, and on the average he would not perhaps have to walk above twenty miles per week. It would never exceed this, unless when a line was defective, and upon the inspection of a new line. The qualifications he would require to possess are industry and intelligence, without austerity of manner on the one hand, or being subject to be led from his duty by the flattery of the great on the other. From the appointment of such an officer the greatest satisfaction would result to the State, to Boards of Direction, to railway proprietors, and last, though by no means least, to the travelling public.

The length of this letter obliges me to defer my promised remarks on the last week's Gloucester affair, along with other important matters; but I must put you right as to a small error that you have been led into. You stated that the new engine which Mr. M'Connell was driving was of his own manufacture. Now, the engine was manufactured by Messrs. Jones and Potts, of Newton; and it is a pity that Mr. M'Connell did not attend to the admonition given him by Mr. Jones, when he first put the steam on the engine. It is easy to see how your correspondent has been led into error. Mr. M'Connell is making a new engine for the Lickey incline, and the accident taking place at the incline, strangers would conclude that it had arisen with the engine which Mr. M'Connell has been boasting will do such wonders. More of this by and by.

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#### LETTER XXIX.

Birmingham, September 12, 1844.

FROM the ill-advised scheme of the North Midland locomotive economy being persisted in upon the amalgamated Midland Railways, the repetition

of a fatal catastrophe was to me not at all surprising; nor was I astonished in the least (although dissatisfied) with the verdict of the jury; for in this instance, as in the late fatal accident in Clay Cross tunnel, the proper evidence was carefully kept back. That this melancholy affair was occasioned by mere accident I cannot admit. I attribute it solely to incapacity and negligence. That circumstances did occur as related before the Coroner is true; but it is also true that the real cause of the accident was withheld. The case of the young woman (sweetheart to the unfortunate deceased) demands, above all others, the particular attention of the Midland Railways Board, or rather, I should say, of Messrs. Clarke and Kirtley. It is not my intention to deal much in personality in this letter, because I have already proved, by numerous instances, that the policy of the North Midland locomotive management is upon the most dangerous and most destructive system possible as regards life and property. I shall also refrain, as much as possible, from making further remarks upon Mr. Matthew Kirtley's total incapacity as a Locomotive Superintendent. The plain statement of facts that I shall lay before you will be a further proof of all my former allegations.

Before I proceed you must permit me to make one observation. It is most surprising to me, and likewise to many of Mr. Hudson's most strenuous supporters and admirers, that he, who has proved himself to be possessed of such gigantic talents with reference to the extension of railways and to railway management generally, should continue to allow himself to be swayed by any party, to lend his all-powerful aid to a vicious system of management and selection of officials in the locomotive department of the Midland Railways; a department above all others requiring men possessed of great natural endowments, combined with a thorough knowledge of the profession. In proof of this he has only to cast his eye over my last letter, which appeared in your journal of the 6th July, and there he will see that where there is a proper selection of officials, competent drivers, &c., there never occurs loss of life, nor hair-breadth escapes, nor destruction of property; while, on the other hand, he will observe, that on whatever line the smallest tendency to imitate the North Midland Management appears, all these much-to-be-lamented disasters have repeatedly occurred, and are still occurring, as I shall hereafter show. If Mr. Hudson would take the trouble to review the matter calmly, dispassionately, and with a due consideration for the safety of the public and the property of the proprietors, I feel persuaded that he would speedily effect a change. He has only to put his veto upon the existing system, and it will fall to pieces.

I shall now proceed to the facts connected with this lamentable occurrence. On the morning of Monday, the 2nd instant, H. Berry, engine-driver, was ordered out with No. 74 (the most powerful engine belonging to the North Midland line—she has 15-inch cylinders, and 2-feet stroke), to take twenty-six empty carriages to Masborough station (Sheffield Junction), for the accommodation of the special-train, with passengers from Sheffield to Hull. On reaching Masborough station, a driver of the name of Steele (who is pilot-driver at Masborough, and a favourite of Mr. Peter Clarke's) stepped upon No. 74, and told Berry that he (Steele) was to conduct the train to Hull, and take that opportunity of

visiting his friends there. Berry and Steele had some altercation on the subject; upon which Steele informed him he had authority to do so from Mr. Clarke, who was in the train, and likewise from Mr. Kirtley, who was also in the train. Upon this Berry gave up his engine, and Steele proceeded with the train. Upon reaching Taylor's Junction, where the Selby line joins, Steele was disappointed, for the North Midland engine with its driver was not allowed to run upon the Hull line. Mr. Gray was there with his engine, the *Vulcan*—the extraordinary powers of which you noticed in a former paper. Steele was determined to proceed to Hull at all hazards, either by stealth or as a passenger, and left the engine for upwards of nine hours to the care of the fireman, who hitherto had had little experience, having been so employed only about five weeks. The fireman neglected the engine. On the return of the train, Steele, of course, came with it, to conduct it back to Masborough. He came from the Hull train, and stepped on No. 74, never examining the engine to see if she had been properly cared for in his absence, as all experienced enginemen are in the practice of doing before starting, even although they have not been absent, it being the most important part of their duty to see as far as possible if the machinery be in perfect order, and all parts sufficiently oiled. (In proof of this you will recollect that Mr. Thomas Kirtley and Mr. Marlow attributed the death of the driver in the previous case to his neglect in not oiling.) No. 26 took the lead, conducted by Berry, the accustomed engineman of No. 74, and in this state they proceeded. On reaching near to Swinton station, where the line rises, the "brasses" of Steele's engine became over-heated from want of oil; and from incapacity and negligence, he allowed his fire to get too low, and his steam went down, so that the train came to a dead stand. It is to be observed, that all this time Mr. Matthew Kirtley was on the foot-plate of the engine, and, certainly, if he be fit to hold the station he is placed in, he should have been able to detect Steele's negligence, which would have prevented the fatal occurrence. After increasing the fire, and getting the steam up, and before they could make a start with so heavy a train upon an incline, it was necessary to slacken the train back a little, to give the engine greater power by jerking the whole train, which accounts completely for the twelve carriages breaking loose at the time they did. This exactly coincides with the evidence of Mr. Clarke, who stated that coupling chains frequently break before starting at a station, and the manner they were jerked upon the incline in this instance was much more severe than is usually caused at starting from a station.

Thus I have stated the real cause of the accident, and my statement, I think, fully bears out the charge of incapacity and negligence—a fault doubly inexcusable from being done under the eye of the Locomotive Superintendent of the line. The whole of the evidence brought forward seemed to have for its object to implicate Mould, who came up with his train, whereas no possible blame could fairly be attached to him. He was running at his speed until he rounded the curve, and it was only then he saw the obstruction, when he was within 200 yards of the train. Indeed he cannot receive too much praise for the manner in which he brought up his train. If it had been in many hands on the line, the

shock would have been awful. It was given in evidence that there were tender lamps behind the train, but there are many persons who declare that there were no lamps, and that the only signal Mould could observe was the fire dropping from the engines, No. 74 and 26. Allowing, however, that there was a sufficiency of signal-lamps behind, and also that the greatest imprudence could be justly imputed to Mould in the stopping of his train, still *that* would have nothing to do with the first and true cause of the accident as above stated. Again, is there not culpable neglect to be attached to Mr. Kirtley, inasmuch as, when the engine he was on was unable to proceed, from want of oil to the machinery, and steam to the boiler, he did not take the precaution to send a couple of men with signal lamps back around the curve? There was sufficient time, from the first stoppage to the accident, for those men to have gone 100 yards beyond the curve, and I have no doubt that if Steele had been an old Midland Counties' driver, and Mr. Kirtley not been upon the engine, the evidence given before the coroner and jury would have been very different. This conjecture will appear feasible as I proceed to explain the existing dangerous arrangements of the extensive Derby station.

1st. You are aware that after the amalgamation, Mr. Matthew Kirtley was appointed Locomotive Superintendent, and that Mr. Josiah Kearsley, who had a much higher claim upon the Directors in a pecuniary point of view (putting aside mental abilities and actual practical qualifications), was displaced. This change became a dead loss to the three Companies of at least 1,500*l.* There was certainly no economy in *this*.

2nd. Let me compare the qualifications of the two, although I have no doubt many of your readers will say this is perfectly superfluous. I would ask any one who has the least knowledge of Mr. Kirtley's qualifications as a Locomotive Engineer, what pretensions that person had to so responsible a situation as he now fills? When he took the place of Mr. Birkenshaw on the Derby line, he undid what that able Engineer had done, to the destruction of the Company's property, as has been repeatedly shown. On the other hand, what could possibly be the disqualification attached to Mr. Kearsley? I am perfectly at a loss to conceive upon what grounds the Directors supplanted Mr. Kearsley, particularly at such a sacrifice. Mr. Kirtley, by his own account, was never bred to the business, while Mr. Kearsley was regularly apprenticed to as extensive and respectable an engineering establishment as any in Liverpool. I have had the testimony of many an excellent workman, that towards the latter end of his apprenticeship Mr. Kearsley proved himself to be as good a practical workman as any on the establishment. In addition to this, he received a superior education to fit him for the responsible situation which he attained on the Midland Counties' and other lines; and I ask if in that situation he disappointed the most sanguine of his friends? He did not. He proved that he was second to none as a Locomotive Superintendent. Recklessness or carelessness, or unnecessary squandering of the Company's property, never was or could be attributed to *him*, and yet in spite of his qualifications he was supplanted by an individual who is possessed of no real qualification whatever. The only cause I can assign for such a change is, that Mr.

Kearsley is a gentleman who it was well known would not become the tool of any party, or submit to impolitic measures that would jeopardise the public, and lead to the destruction of the Company's property.

3rd. The appointment of Mr. Kirtley has led to other evils, as a necessary consequence. Of course he would not select a person to be under him who possessed brighter talents than himself, and accordingly he appointed Mr. Marlow (who was under him on the Derby line) as his locomotive foreman. Now, Mr. Marlow is as unfitted for the situation as Mr. Kirtley is for his. I could have many times referred, in no complimentary terms, to this individual, when treating of the Derby line; but as he was necessarily put under certain restrictions, such as not to run an engine, I took no notice of him, seeing that the public could not be injured by any of his acts. It would seem, however, that both Mr. Kirtley and Mr. Marlow have forgotten the instructions and admonitions of Mr. Birkenshaw. It would be wasting space and time to go into detail of the cause of those injunctions; it will be sufficient to state that Mr. Marlow's recent acts in running engines are something similar to what they were years back. A few weeks ago the *Burton* engine (she was one of the dilapidated Derby engines, and went under a thorough repair to convey the Queen from Hampton to Derby) came out of the repairing shed under the new title of No. 33. Mr. Marlow, forgetting the injunctions formerly laid upon him at the Derby station, thought he would try his hand again, and run this engine with a passenger-train to Nottingham. On his return, on coming to Burrow Ash, about four miles from Derby, he broke her down, and had to remain for the pilot! No. 60 had been under a thorough repair for a great length of time, but on coming out she ran for only a few days, when she became disabled, and was repaired again, but again only ran two days when she broke down. Neither master nor man could properly set the valves of one of these repaired engines, and so nonplussed are they, that the engine will have to come to Birmingham to try what Mr. Fenwick, at the station here, can do with her. Had Mr. Kearsley been kept in his place, such expensive mishaps as those would never have taken place.

4th. Since the amalgamation, the North Midland system of pressing down the enginemen to the lowest possible pitch, with a view to get rid of all the old high-priced men, as they call them, has been carried out. In this the public are deeply interested. In many instances the men are worked seventeen hours per day, and so fatigued do they get, that sleep overtakes them while running the trains at the close of their day's work. If the men complain, they are told to give it up if they choose. Such a system has had the effect of driving abroad many of the best men, who have been on the various lines since the commencement of railways. Inexperienced firemen are put into their places, and mere youths supplant the firemen. If this system be persevered in, it will not be long before you have to record another fatal accident. This seems, however, to be looked upon as a small matter, provided a paltry saving can be shown in wages. It is an easy thing to mystify repairs in half-yearly accounts, and certainly no new thing.

5th. If some better arrangement should not take place as the



approaching dark weather sets in, life will be sacrificed on the station, from the immense number of trains going out and in, to which are to be added the pilot-engines. Since the change, the whole of the engines must go upon one line to reach the shed or the turn-table, and many of the engines are in such bad repair, that the men are unable to reverse the engines in sufficient time. There have been several hair-breadth escapes on the station in day-light; what then can we expect in the dark?

I shall refer to just one more circumstance in connection with this subject. On Mr. Kirtley's appointment, he ordered the greater part of the Midland Counties' engines to be put aside, although no set of engines in the kingdom were in more perfect condition. The work they performed, and the regularity they kept, were decided proofs of the superior condition they were in. The reason alleged by Mr. Kirtley was, that he considered the four-wheeled engines not so safe as the six-wheeled. Now, I should like to hear Mr. Kirtley's arguments upon this head. There has been much written upon the relative safety of both. I never took any part in the discussion, neither is it my intention to advocate the superiority of the one over the other, for both are equally safe when kept in proper repair. The safety with which they were run on the Midland Counties', and are now running on the London and Birmingham, warrants this assertion. It has been said, that the six-wheeled engine is the safer if the crank axle should break, because it would still remain upon four wheels. Grant this; but what would be the consequence to a six-wheeled engine if the leading axle should break? I should say the most disastrous that possibly could be imagined; for there would be greater weight in front of the crank axle, which would cause the engine to "tip right over," and if the hind axle should break, the train would run right over the engine; whereas it has been proved by experience, that if the leading axle of a four-wheeled engine should break, the engine, from the construction of its bearings, would continue to run the same as before. Thus then they both have their advantages and disadvantages.

I must once more refer to another instance of the effects of pseudo-economy which occurred yesterday (Wednesday) on the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway. It appears to me that nothing, however disastrous, will induce those bright-headed Superintendents to retrace their steps. On the day above-mentioned, one of Mr. M'Connell's northern and cheap drivers was ordered to take two crippled engines from Gloucester to the repairing shed at Bromsgrove. Before starting, he was cautioned to be careful as he proceeded along, for the goods'-train was a-head of him, which he would in all probability overtake. Upon his approach to Dunhamstead station he was apprised by a plate-layer that the luggage-train had just passed, and he was signalled to proceed cautiously. Disregarding his instructions at Gloucester and the plate-layer's signal, the driver proceeded on at the top of his speed slap into the train, smashing two of the waggons to pieces, damaging others, straining the leading axle of his engine, and otherwise injuring it. The brakesman of the luggage-train had a most miraculous escape. The saving of his life can only be attributed to the violence of the concussion,

for he was pitched over the smashed waggons into one that did not break down. Had he fallen one waggon short he would have been literally cut to pieces. The lowest calculation that this damage can be reckoned at is 250*l.* How many savings in shillings and sixpences will it take to replace this loss? But conceive the disastrous consequences, if it had been a passenger-train!

I cannot conclude without expressing my opinion, that Mr. Gladstone and the Board of Trade are morally responsible for the fatal accident referred to and the above hair-breadth escape. Formerly the Board of Trade could not go beyond advice; but now they are invested with full powers, and yet they seem to be perfectly contented with General Pasley's superficial surveys and the inquiries at Coroners' inquests. Even if General Pasley were gifted with the most transcendent powers, physical and mental, it would be impossible for him to give proper attention to all his various duties—such as attending at Whitehall, superintending the blasting of cliffs, sub-marine explosions, inspection of railways, Directors' banquets, &c. &c. The whole time of one person should be directed to railways, and that time constantly occupied on them. Mr. Gladstone has now another reason why the Board of Trade should interfere. I may fail in what I have so often recommended, but I shall never fail, with your permission, to let your readers and the railway public know where the blame should really be attached when such melancholy events take place.

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### LETTER XXX.

Birmingham, November 12, 1844.

In my last letter, treating of the lamentable accident on the North Midland line on the 2nd of the same month, the following passage will be found:—"If this system be persevered in (referring to the employment of inexperienced drivers) it will not be long before you have to record another fatal accident." This prediction certainly was very soon verified, for the accident which occurred on the above line on the afternoon of Saturday, the 22nd instant, was attended with results all but fatal, as the unfortunate engineman, who leaped, with three others, from the two engines to save their lives, continues still in a very dangerous state, and if he does recover (which is still doubtful) he will be another living witness of the imprudent management of that ill-fated line. In the sequel of the same letter, I stated "that I considered Mr. Gladstone and the Board of Trade were morally responsible for the above fatal accident;" and I cannot but reiterate, that these high functionaries are, in every respect, responsible for the late heartrending occurrence on the Brandling Junction line, and that they are responsible likewise for other casualties and risks which, as I shall hereafter show, have taken place since that time, the whole of which I distinctly state to be attributable solely to the supineness and indifference with which the Board of Trade regard the safety of the railway travelling public.

It would be occupying your space to no purpose to animadvert on the various Managements and individual officials in stronger terms than I have had repeated occasion and too much cause to do ; for both the Management and officials appear to be hardened against all sound advice and public censure, and unless the authorised and responsible officers of the Government step in and interfere, there will be no want of alarming collisions and fatal accidents, during these dark nights, to put upon record.

I have already stated, that it is not my intention to be severe on individuals ; I shall simply relate facts, sufficient for your readers to judge of the justness of my opinion expressed against the Board of Trade, at the same time redeeming my pledge, that "if I failed in obtaining a judicious interference from high quarters, I should not fail to let your readers and the railway public know where the blame should really be attached."

It is then a fact, notwithstanding the general opinion to the contrary, that there are not upon record so many destructive collisions within the short space of time as those that have taken place within the last month.

1st. The Brandling Junction accident. I shall not occupy your space by relating the whole circumstances connected with this lamentable catastrophe. It will long be remembered ; and, besides, there is not a newspaper in the kingdom but can be referred to for those particulars. My intention is to show that nothing but destruction could have been expected from the manner in which that short line has hitherto been worked, and still, to a certain extent, must be worked, until the Board of Trade compel a considerable alteration. If the hints so repeatedly thrown out in these letters, as to the improvement of Government inspection, had been attended to, this fatal affair would not have taken place ; for every dangerous expedient resorted to on that line would have been made known to the Board of Trade, who would certainly have found just cause for interference. Previous to the accident, it was the regular practice every Wednesday morning to start two passenger-trains from Shields station—the one on the up-line, and the other on the down, as if they were put on for a race to the first station. On their arrival there they were then both placed on one and the same line, the first train at the station taking the lead. In a former letter I commented strongly upon the impropriety of running passenger-trains tender first ; the dangerous consequences attending such a practice are allowed by all. On these short lines this practice cannot be avoided until the Directors are compelled to put down a sufficient number of turn-tables. From the form of the Shields line, they run from Gateshead to Sunderland engine first ; from Sunderland to Shields tender first ; and from Shields to Gateshead engine first, and so on. The accident occurred on that part of the line where it was customary to run up and down-trains on one line, without proper caution being resorted to to prevent collision. It was also the practice to give only a verbal order when an engine was to proceed from one station to another (probably the motive was economy in the article of paper), and a mistaken verbal order to the engineman was the cause of the accident. The managers, in this instance, were

exceedingly culpable, for they must have known that the engineman could not have reached Shields in sufficient time to start with the passenger-train at the proper hour, and therefore it was reasonable to conclude that the train would be started with another engine; and, to avoid a collision, he ought to have been ordered on the down line. The morning was dark, and he was not provided with any signal-lamp, red, white, or green; and habit and custom making men careless of their own lives, and the meeting of one another on the same line being so common, danger accruing from it was never dreamed of till the accident occurred. It was no uncommon thing, that when two trains were approaching half-way betwixt any crossing, the enginemen would go on until they came close up, and then they would contend by a trial of power which should have to go back, the weaker engine being obliged to give way to the stronger. Again, when anything was amiss on the line, it was the practice to make to the nearest crossing, get upon the other line, and proceed without any signal or warning being given. Was a fatal accident, therefore, to be wondered at? Could you have believed that such gross and unwarrantable recklessness could have existed on any railway in England? The Directory of the Shields line must be as *rotten* as the specimen of the *rotten timber* of which the carriages were composed, and which was so surreptitiously purloined from the office of the *Newcastle Journal* by Mr. Allport, the Manager, as mentioned in your last week's paper. The Editor of that journal seemed surprised that such conduct should be resorted to by any Manager; but if he were as well acquainted with the railway acts of the gentleman referred to as I am, he would not be in the least astonished. The Editor may, if he but exercises a little vigilance, return him a just and proper compliment almost any week, in respect of his doings as Manager. You inquire if the above Mr. Allport be your old friend from the "Birmingham and Derby." He is the same gentleman, and, strange as it may appear, he has a colleague as Superintendent of the locomotive department in Mr. Thomas Kirtley, of "North Midland" notoriety. If the former Management of the Brandling Company did not give satisfaction, I can assure the Directors they have not bettered themselves, for two such officers, I am happy to say, could not be found in the kingdom.

2nd. From the repeated strictures I have had so much cause to pass upon Mr. M'Connell and his management on the Birmingham and Gloucester line, you cannot be surprised at what I have to state, although it is certainly most surprising that the many well-informed gentlemen who compose the Board of that line continue to be so blind to his folly. From his continued system of employing improper drivers at low wages, it will be long before the savings of his economy realise a sufficient sum to bear the expense of the mansion in the course of erection for him at Bromsgrove. It would appear that the coffers of this Company are filled to overflowing, as he is allowed so much money wherewithal to experiment on visionary schemes.

On the 27th ultimo, Mr. Allen, the foreman at Bromsgrove, ordered out the "pilot" engineman (one of the cheap hands) to get water previous to the arrival of the luggage-train, so as to be ready to give

assistance if required. This driver, from want of proper knowledge, overfilled his boiler, and put down the steam, so as to be unable to get out of the way. In the interim up comes the luggage-train, and the driver, not being aware the line was blocked, had not sufficient time to bring up. He and the fireman of the luggage-train, seeing the danger, leaped from the engine, the train "pitching" into the "pilot" engine, breaking the cylinders, smoke-box, &c., of the luggage-engine, and damaging the "pilot" engine. The men escaped with some severe contusions. This was considered by Mr. M'Connell but a trifle, 100*l.* covering the damage.

On the Thursday night following, about 8 o'clock, at the same station, the Lickey bank engine, conducted by George Dunn (a *protege* of Mr. M'Connell's), assisted the passenger-train from Gloucester up the bank, passing the passenger-train from Birmingham. On reaching the top he "shunted" on the down line to return to the station, and although he was perfectly aware that the Birmingham passenger-train was on the same line for the purpose of getting a supply of water, he proceeded recklessly on, and went right into the train, jumbling the passengers altogether, many of them receiving severe contusions. A female and child were dangerously injured. The cylinders and the gearing of the pilot-engine were broken, and Dunn had a very narrow escape with his own life. He was knocked from the footplate and carried speechless to his house. So serious were the contusions inside the carriages, that the blood had to be washed off the lining next morning. Mr. M'Connell kept his fitters and other hands on all night to repair the damage, to make it appear as light as possible, but he found himself mistaken, for three days did not complete the repairs, with all the exertions he could command. For a proof of these all but fatal collisions, I would refer to Mr. Sanders, the Secretary's report book. I know they are recorded there. What is most extraordinary is that this very driver is continued as one of the banksmen on this dangerous incline, although he has been guilty of the like offence before. It is not long since the passengers reported him on their arrival at Birmingham. Not long ago he laboured the greater part of an afternoon to take up a train of salt up the incline without effect until his day's work was at an end, when the driver came who relieved him for the night, attached his engine to the train, and ascended the incline with the greatest ease! While favouritism continues on railways it is perfectly useless to talk of incapacity.

With reference to Mr. M'Connell's expensive schemes, I shall only for the present state two glaring instances. No. 17 (the *Pivot*) engine was made by Banks, and did her work well. Mr. M'Connell thought he would make a considerable alteration in the motion, and when he had completed the alteration all the men in the shed could not put her in gear, or once in gear could not put her out of gear, so that after great expense and labour she was put aside, and there she has remained for four months to be put into her original state! Again, there is No. 27 (the *Droitwich*) made by Nesbit. A better engine of that construction never was run, but Mr. M'Connell must dabble with her also. His alterations were such that what he ordered to be done to-day was undone to-morrow, and she has been not fewer than eleven times under repair

this year! I shall give just one more specimen of his economy, although I could easily fill many pages. He is continually discharging all the old hands that have been on the line from the beginning. He goes to them, tells them that he is obliged to reduce their wages, and unless they will remain for 10s. per week they must leave. Of course many have left; now what is the result of this proceeding? A few weeks ago he introduced several mere youths into the shed, to supply the places of those who had left from the foregoing reasons. A waggon load of wheels arrived to be taken into the shed, and it was usual to put them on a lurry for the purpose of conveying them through the shed. From the want of knowledge on the part of the new comers in the management of the lurry, it suddenly got the better of them, and the waggon followed with great violence, broke the turn-table, and tumbled into the pit, the young men nearly losing their lives. This sacrifice of property was occasioned to make a flourish that Mr. M'Connell can do his shed work so much cheaper than on any other line. No doubt he can do this on the face of the pay-sheet, but behold the damage created to obtain it!

3rd. I shall now call your attention to the North Midland accident which occurred on a Saturday the 2nd instant. This accident was occasioned from negligence and incapacity, as in the instance of the previous fatal accident on the same line. It is remarkable that this accident was caused by the same engine, No. 74, which is a very excellent and powerful goods'-engine, but unfortunately the driver who used to work her efficiently having been removed to run a passenger-train, Mr. M. Kirtley supplied his place by an inexperienced young man from the shed at Leeds. I do not wish to give this young man's name, for he may yet become a good driver. Hitherto he has not had sufficient practice, but he is "cheap," and *that* is a sufficient qualification for Mr. Kirtley. On the afternoon of Saturday the 2nd, this new driver was dispatched from Derby with fifty-four empty coal waggons for Clay Cross station. He left Derby forty-five minutes before the passenger-train to allow him plenty of time to reach his destination, a distance of only twenty-four miles, but from not being able to manage the engine properly, he lost the whole of his advance time before he got the distance of eighteen miles. Finding he had done so, he made the best of his way to cross the line near Stretton station. He knew that at this time a special train was due from Leeds, and he sent his fireman forward to the station to signal the special train should it come up while he was crossing the line, but neglected to send back the brakesman to signal the passenger-train that was due from Derby. He crossed the line, and from the curve and slippery state of the rails he came to a stand. He, however, made a start again; in doing so, one of the coupling chains broke, which parted the train. Finding from the lightness of his train that something had gone wrong, he brought up, and stepping from his engine, went back to ascertain what was the matter, and had just reached the end of the train, when the passenger-train from Derby came up at full speed with two engines, Nos. 40 and 19, and pitched with a terrific crash into the remaining part of the waggons, the engines tipping right over, the one on the right hand, the other on the left. The driver of the empty

waggons had a narrow escape. So sudden was the crash, that when No. 40 tipped over, the chimney almost touched his back. Had not the driver and fireman of those engines suddenly leaped, they would have been crushed to pieces. The waggons were doubled up, one above another, in a frightful manner, tearing the line up for nearly 50 yards. The contusions the passengers received were great. The news of the catastrophe reached Derby about 6 P.M., when several engines were dispatched to render assistance; and in the mean time, to make the passengers as comfortable as possible, they kindled a large fire with the fragments of the broken waggons to keep them warm, it being dark, damp, and very cold. In what a most unenviable condition the passengers must have been while brooding over this *bonfire*, moralising and reflecting on the narrow escape their bodies had of being shivered into as many pieces as the waggons that were burning before them! Danger to the passengers did not end here, for when other engines had been provided to take the train on, it was necessary that they should proceed on the up-line, and even although Mr. Kirtley and many other railway officers were there, not one of them had the foresight to dispatch signals on the line, so that had another engine been coming up, a second collision would have been inevitable! This occurrence will be another great deduction from the "economy" fund. No. 40 engine will be worth about 5*l.* for scrap-iron, to say nothing of the other engine, carriages, and waggons. I have not space to dwell upon another crash of two luggage-trains on the same line. Suffice it to say that the waggons were "*smashed.*"

4th. I shall once more, with your permission, refer to the Grand Junction and Mr. Trevethick. I confess that I thought I had done with this line. One would naturally have thought that after the frequent expensive lessons the above gentleman had received, he would not have attempted anything of the kind again; but it appears otherwise. About three weeks ago, Mr. Marshall, Superintendent at Liverpool, recommended to be put on as a driver a favourite fitter of his, who had previously had very little practice, overstepping many a man who has had years' experience on the line. The consequence was, that this young driver, the second week, came heedlessly into Edgell station, and pitched into a coal-train belonging to the Liverpool and Manchester Company. The matter was hushed up with all possible dispatch. It does appear that precept upon precept, and example upon example, have not the least effect on many of the Locomotive Superintendents. While referring to this line I cannot but express my satisfaction at the prospect that harmony is likely to be soon restored, by paying the enginemmen for the work they are compelled to do on the Sunday. (On the Dover line they are very properly allowed a day and a half for that day.) I am glad to understand that both Captain Huish and Mr. Trevethick are favourable to it, and it is but reasonable to expect such a proceeding from the Captain, for he has, it is said, been for some time past dunning the Directors for an augmentation of his present 1,000*l.* to 1,500*l.*! Mr. Locke was at the Liverpool Board last week, and on a former occasion the enginemmen's Sunday work was referred to him. I have no doubt he would give proper advice. There is not a Railway

Engineer in the kingdom more able than he to give a practical opinion on such matters.

From the foregoing statements it must appear plain to every one of your readers that if the Board of Trade, upon obtaining their extended powers, had instituted an inspection of all the railways similar to that suggested by me, not one life would have been sacrificed, and the railway proprietors would have been gainers. If the Inspector-General's yearly report be candidly drawn up for this year, he will have little to say of the good that has accrued from his inspection. I have repeatedly proved that it is impossible for him to do it effectively by himself; the very station he holds, and the manner in which he inspects the lines, forbid it. As usual, he will no doubt show how many thousands of miles he has travelled, to prove that he has not been idle; but what does this avail? Nothing! I have not the least hesitation in stating that I could obtain more real practical information as to the actual working of the railways by travelling 1,000 miles, without the power the Inspector-General is possessed of, but by putting questions, and walking to and fro upon any line he thinks proper, than he could do with all his great powers, travelling over 10,000 miles. I have read in the newspapers of Government officers being sent to several stations to inspect the state of the third-class carriages. This is all very good in its way; but I have *not* heard of any steps being taken to prevent the putting on of incompetent and inexperienced men as drivers. It is certainly far more important for passengers to be guarded against the loss of life and limb, than that the attention of the Board of Trade should be wholly engrossed to guard them against "a wet jacket," or from paying a farthing a mile extra. The same expense to the Board would realise both. I am not particularly wedded to the plan previously suggested; I would cheerfully advocate any measure that would tend to the putting down of such disgraceful management as has been witnessed, and still is persisted in, on so many lines.

I see a rumour noticed in your last week's paper that Mr. Gladstone is to leave the Board of Trade, and to be replaced by Mr. Cardwell, M.P. I trust that if this gentleman does step into Mr. Gladstone's shoes, he will not follow in his footsteps, and trouble himself about many things which it was proved to Mr. Gladstone publicly and privately that he had no right to do, but that he will turn his attention to more effective measures for securing the public safety. It was admitted by the majority of the leading railway gentlemen examined before the Parliamentary Committee that it would be desirable that the Government should have a discretionary power over the working of railways, and that such would have a very salutary effect. I am decidedly opposed to all interference as to financial matters; my principal desire is that a check should be put upon the imprudence of incompetent Locomotive Superintendents. I know many Superintendents who require no such check, but I know as many who do require to be checked. I have no objection that a Superintendent should give his enginemen only *2s. 6d.* a day, provided he can get perfectly qualified men for that money; but because he cannot get proper hands at his price, is it just, is it reasonable, that the public safety should be periled at the whim of any man?



## LETTER XXXI.

Birmingham, December 11, 1844.

THE end of this month completes two years since I first addressed you upon that ever-to-be-remembered and ill-judged *sweep* which was so unfortunately resorted to on the North Midland Railway, and which has been the cause of the sacrifice of so much human life, independent of the hundreds of thousands of pounds'-worth of property which has been destroyed under the mistaken notion of *economy*. I am desirous of calling the attention of the readers of your Journal to the late lamentable accident on the Midland Railway near Nottingham, which was occasioned under the same misguided management as that on the North Midland Railway. Many of your present readers may not be aware of what I have already predicted, and I consider it proper, therefore, in the course of this letter, to allude to former letters. I shall simply refer to dates, which will save both time and space. You may remember that when my first letter appeared, a correspondent was very indignant that you should have failed to caution the public against the jeopardy to which he himself was exposed. Since then a similar complaint cannot fairly be brought against you, for you have been incessant in your endeavours to caution the various mismanagements not to jeopardise the public; and if such timely admonitions had been attended to, the sacrifice of life and property to which I have adverted would not have taken place.

I must be excused for naming the parties on whom I place the main responsibility of the many lamentable catastrophes which have taken place on the North Midland Railway, now under the designation of the Midland Railway, and which call for immediate and energetic measures being taken by the Board of Trade. In doing so, I wish it to be expressly understood, that I do not mean to extinguish the present system of the majority of the locomotive managements, or discourage those whom I have endeavoured to restrain; my desire is, that it should be distinctly understood that henceforward a most vigilant and scrutinising eye shall be kept over the whole, and particularly over those who have so obstinately persevered in a course of utter recklessness.

The time has now arrived that the Board of Trade *must* interfere; but should they unfortunately continue apathetic, the public must then appeal to the highest tribunal of the land, and obtain that protection of their lives which they are entitled to demand. I never have advocated, nor shall I ever advocate, a complete Government control over the working of the railways; neither do I advocate an extravagant expenditure. I have repeatedly explained that the system I wish to see adopted is by no means expensive, and that though simple, it would be very effective. I laid that plan down twenty-one months ago, after the death of Mr. Harvey; and if it had been acted upon, all the lives which have been since sacrificed in railway accidents would have been saved.

The *Leeds Mercury* of the 2nd July, 1843, lauded the Management of the North Midland Railway, and gave much credit to the spirited Directors who had obtained a sufficient number of skilful and practised

men to run the trains. This, by the way, they have never yet been able to accomplish, and never will, until they are compelled to change the present Management. In a letter of the 9th January, 1843, I called the attention of the Directors to the alarming and dangerous manner in which the public were conveyed upon that line, and begged of them to recall their former enginemen. On the 21st March of the same year I noticed the reductions that had taken place in the staff of watchmen and switchmen, and pointed out the particular places where it was probable life would be lost in consequence of these reductions. Clay Cross tunnel was one of those places; and, indeed, the collisions that have taken place there have been many, and life has there been lost. In the same letter I pointed out that from Stretton shunt or siding they had taken away the watchman, and predicted what the consequence would be at that place. I stated, "It was a place of equal importance as the tunnel; they have removed two switchmen. At this place it is where all the coal-trains shunt from the main line, to allow the passenger-trains to proceed." (It was the circumstance of doing this which caused the destructive accident so lamentably occurring on the 2nd of November last.) "Since this change, when the brakeman of the coal-train observes a passenger-train coming on (*you must notice they have now a double duty, or, I may rather say, a treble duty to perform, for they must look out before and behind, and either the one or the other act as switchman*), the brakeman or fireman must leap from the train at full speed, and shift the points to get off the main line, and if this be not done as quick as lightning, a collision cannot be avoided, for there is no one there appointed to run with a signal to stop the passenger-train." Had the policeman been kept there, when the coal-waggon-train blocked up the line, he would have signalled the passenger-train to stop, and this would have prevented the accident. In your Editorial remarks of the 25th March, 1843, referring to the unfortunate death of Mr. Harvey, at Barnsley station, and which was occasioned by the gross incapacity of the driver, you said, "We may hereafter return to this subject, but in the meantime, we earnestly call the notice of the Board of Trade to the letter of our correspondent 'Veritas Vincit,' in another column. If General Pasley and his colleagues allow further retrenchments to go forward on the North Midland Railway without remonstrance, we say most decidedly that all future 'accidents,' such as led to the destruction of the unfortunate Mr. Harvey, must be considered to be lying at their doors."

Again, on the 29th April of the same year, when I called your attention to the sweeping reductions which were then contemplated on the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway, all of which were subsequently carried out, in your Editorial remarks in that paper, you said, "Should it unfortunately turn out that the pseudo-economical policy is to be pursued, we shall not hesitate to denounce, with all the energy of which we are capable, so unwise, so dangerous a proceeding, and all concerned in it, be they high or low. The safety of the public is paramount. If railways cannot be worked at a profit, without having recourse to expedients involving risk to those who use them, in Heaven's name let them be shut up at once. Meantime, we call the attention of General Pasley and the Board of Trade to our correspondent's startling announcements."

Since then, look at the number of deaths under the former Management, all of which, as I decidedly proved at the time of each event, were attributable solely to the negligence and incapacity of the engine-men, or the reduction of the policemen, and up to this moment not one act of interference has the Board of Trade attempted relative to the safety of the public!

With reference to the late fatal accident near Nottingham, the public are already in possession of the particulars of two lengthened investigations; the one jury finding Mr. Lightfoot guilty of manslaughter, and the other fining the Company in the shape of a deodand to the extent of 1,000*l.*, but both juries agreeing that the grossest mismanagement exists on these lines. The jury on Mr. Dean expressed themselves astonished that General Pasley could have so soon arrived at the conclusion that Mr. Lightfoot was the sole cause of the accident. In a private note I wrote to you, twenty-four hours before the General made his inquiry relative to the accident, I mentioned that I had arrived at the same conclusion. There was no mystery in the matter, and not the least doubt as to the blame attributable to Mr. Lightfoot. He had no right to go to Beeston station. He considered himself the superior of Mr. Raven, and took the power out of his hands, thereby assuming the whole responsibility by ordering the train to proceed. It was stated in extenuation that he was risking his own life; but this is poor consolation to the relatives of the deceased. If he had lost his life, it would not in the smallest degree have made his conduct less culpable. By this imprudent act he has caused much serious reflection to be cast upon Mr. Raven; for, perhaps, Mr. Clarke had invested Mr. Lightfoot with power to supersede Mr. Raven whenever he made his appearance at Beeston. At all events, Mr. Lightfoot did supersede him on this unfortunate occasion, and no other person can in any way be blamed but Mr. Lightfoot, except as to the gross general mismanagement which has been so frequently proved to exist on the Midland lines. On whom, then, should the principal blame of these fatal disasters fall? On Messrs. Hudson and Clarke for carrying on their "economy" system to such a fearful extent, and employing incompetent Superintendents, and those Superintendents improper subordinates!

Mr. Matthew Kirtley, in giving his evidence before the Coroner, cut a very pretty figure. In the first place, he stated that he had been Locomotive Superintendent of the Midland Railway for the space of five months, and that he had held a similar situation for five years. How he can make this out I know not, seeing that for about four years he had the charge of only four engines at Hampton, during which time he was a petty Superintendent under Mr. Birkenshaw; and when that gentleman left the Derby Railway Mr. Kirtley was appointed in his stead. I have in numerous instances proved that he is not possessed of proper qualifications for such a responsible situation as he now holds. Even had he been blessed with much greater natural talent than he can boast of, his experience at Hampton was quite inadequate to justify the Directors in substituting him for Mr. Josiah Kearsley; and this will appear evident when I treat of the Derby station.

In speaking of the enginemen, Mr. Kirtley stated, "that they are so

conversant with their duty that it is unnecessary to take any special measures to ensure their knowledge of the rules." I would ask Mr. Kirtley what the rules are printed for? Surely not for waste paper! I beg to differ from Mr. Kirtley. He has many enginemen who are not properly conversant with their duty; and I would just wish him to say what qualifications the driver who runs the mineral train from Derby to Birmingham is possessed of. Previous to giving him an engine, he had been scarcely nine months a fireman, and it not unfrequently happens that he blocks up the line by coming to a stand-still. There are others, I am sorry to say, as bad as he! Mr. Kirtley also states, that "he knows the qualifications of many of them." Ought he not to know the qualifications of *all* of them? He says he does not question them as to their knowledge of the rules; and that he never knew of any system of drilling, with a view to make enginemen, on this or any other line. May I call to his remembrance the M'Connell system on the Gloucester Railway with the *Amusement* engine (as it was then termed)—a plan so simple and easy that Mr. M'Connell could teach *ladies* to drive passenger-trains! Mr. Kirtley is of a very different opinion from Mr. M'Connell, for in his evidence he declares that it is by experience that enginemen gain skill, and yet, at the same time, he places men in charge of engines without any experience whatever! The accident at Stretton shunt or siding was a strong example of this, and many more could be stated. But the moral responsibility of these disasters (to use your own words, penned twenty-one months ago) "must lie at General Pasley's door," for if he had suggested to the Board of Trade a more rigid inspection of railways, there is no doubt it would have been attended to; but, instead of that, he declared to me personally that, notwithstanding all that had been written on the subject of the North Midland line, he saw no cause for further Government interference! I replied, that if the Government did not further interfere at once, the rails of the Midland lines would be so notorious for slaughter, that he would be *compelled* to interfere. Surely the General will *now* be satisfied!

Government interference would be requisite if for no other purpose than to compel better arrangements as to safety at the Derby station. I have long expected that something fatal would take place at that point during these long foggy nights. This station is exactly a quarter of a mile long, and there is only one watchman at each end. When a train arrives, the watchman calls to the engineman to "look out," for he does not know whether the line be clear or not, and on the engineman must proceed at all hazards. The weather has been so thick of late that the engineman could not see the chimney of his engine, and how then can he possibly see if the line be clear? The traffic at this station is almost incredible. I had intended to notice individually all the trains that go out and come in during the twenty-four hours, but it would occupy too much of your space. Suffice it to say, that there are nearly eighty trains, independent of special ones which are very frequent; and from the immense traffic in goods, there are always many engines employed crossing the lines with the goods' waggons, &c., to be placed in their proper places; and yet there is no one appointed to give signals to the

numerous trains! It requires the utmost caution of the most experienced drivers to avoid collision, and the danger is doubly increased by so many inexperienced men being employed. Mr. Kirtley stated before the Coroner that "his enginemen are placed under persons well skilled in the working of railways." Again, I beg leave to differ from Mr. K. The two men he has placed immediately over the enginemen are *not* well skilled in the duties they have to perform; neither Mr. Marlow nor Mr. Cherry is properly qualified for the respective situations, and if I had time I could give many particulars which would prove this. There are many persons connected with that locomotive establishment who can bear testimony to this assertion, and if I am called upon I *will* prove it. In fact, the present state of repair the engines are in would be sufficient testimony that neither is Mr. Kirtley nor are his two foremen competent to attend to them. Mr. Kearsley had always a number of spare engines in first-rate repair, but at this moment there is not a spare engine on that establishment fit to be sent out with a train in safety. Two or three dangerous accidents have been occasioned lately in consequence of the dilapidated state of the engines. Should there be a sudden fall of snow for fifty miles round Derby, the working of the various lines would be at a stand, for it would be out of the power of Mr. Kirtley to supply the trains with a sufficient number of engines to clear off the obstruction.

Besides the shocking state the engines are in, I would call upon Mr. Ellis, the Deputy-Chairman, to put the following question candidly to Mr. Kirtley:—"Have you a sufficient number of good, efficient, and experienced enginemen at your command, to send out with extra engines, if required, upon an emergency?" He must say he has not, for at the moment I write he is not possessed of such men; inasmuch as, with the exception of a very few, the whole of the best men have left the line since the amalgamation. What a deplorable state is this for such an important and extensive station to be reduced to! At this season of the year further fatal accidents are inevitable.

In reverting once more to the Grand Junction, it affords me much pleasure to state that I have little more to complain of on this line; but I am anxious that Mr. Norris should endeavour to persuade Mr. Trevethick to listen to the many sound admonitions I have given him. I also take the liberty of asking Mr. Norris to give Mr. Reid a caution to attend strictly to his own business, and not to further interfere with that of which he knows nothing—although, by the way, I confess I am unable to define what his business is; in fact, I know no one on the line who can tell, for he holds a useless sinecure. I have no wish to cast the smallest reflection on Mr. Norris, for a more assiduous, attentive, and upright Railway Superintendent is not to be met with; but I am very anxious to see realised what Mr. Moss, the worthy Chairman of the Directors, declared this line would shortly be—"Second to none in point of safety, comfort, and management."

Government interference will speedily be requisite in respect of the old and very useful practice of having "pilot-engines;" these have been, in many instances, reduced on the score of *economy*. I have repeatedly pointed out the hardships to which passengers have been exposed for

many hours in a cold, wet, winter night, besides the fatal consequences that might ensue.

The single line from Leamington to Coventry is now open. In my opinion, this ought not to have been done before an electric telegraph had been erected, for until it is supplied with this invaluable invention, it will be subject to the same inconvenience as those lines which have been deprived of "pilots." In fact, it is in a much worse position from being a single line. Suppose an accident were to happen to the engine betwixt Leamington and Kenilworth, whence is the engineman to obtain assistance? From Birmingham, a distance from him above twenty-five miles! Suppose a pilot-engine were at Coventry (which is often the case), and the train from Leamington half an hour or more behind time, no engineman would be justified in running on that line to see what was the matter; if he did, it would be at the risk of utter destruction to himself and others. Under such circumstances, the line should not be worked until an electric telegraph is erected, or a pilot-engine stationed at Kenilworth. Both the propositions I know will be objected to, on the ground of expense; but what have the public to do with expense when their lives are at stake? On every single line in the kingdom parties should be compelled instantly to erect an electric telegraph. The Leamington line belongs to the London and Birmingham Company, and I have not the smallest intention to find fault with the locomotive management of that line. I am perfectly able to bear ample testimony to the excellence of all the internal arrangements Mr. Bury has adopted; they are nearly perfect and complete, as far as the present principle in locomotive management can suggest. But although this be true, I would recommend to the petty Superintendent at Rugby to desist for the future from sowing the seeds of that "wild flower" which has so profusely overgrown the Midland and Gloucester lines. If he does not desist, I shall remind him of this hint.

I cannot conclude this letter without once more calling upon General Pasley to go down to Bromsgrove, and watch the dangerous way in which the public are conveyed upon the Birmingham and Gloucester line. It is true, they have been lucky in not having fatal accidents, but it is also true that hair-breadth escapes have been numerous; and should a fatal accident occur, the Board of Trade can have no excuse in not putting a stop to the danger. When a death takes place on any line, General Pasley is at the spot soon after; but then he is too late. He cannot produce a single instance in which he has suggested the adoption of any precautionary measures, with the exception of recommending the detonating canisters!

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## LETTER XXXII.

Birmingham, January 23, 1845.

In your paper of Saturday last I noticed in your answer to correspondents that my attention is called by a correspondent, styling himself "A Shareholder of the Grand Junction Railway," to the circumstance

of an engine-driver and fireman passing Stafford station asleep, at the rate of 25 miles an hour. I had previously heard of the circumstance, and made inquiry regarding it, but did not consider it worthy of public notice, so far as regards the simple matter itself. I am of the same opinion still, and for the satisfaction of the "Shareholder," I shall give him my reasons—for I have no desire to flinch from the onerous duty I have taken upon myself of exposing the dangerous proceedings that have occurred, and that may hereafter occur, in the railway locomotive establishments of this country. Individually it matters not to me whether the individuals whose conduct I may have reason to censure be high or low; in their public capacity they become public property, just as the Ministers of the day are. The Minister has the power of putting his hands in an indirect manner into the pockets of the community, but a Locomotive Superintendent has by far a more important control over the public. His duty is to adopt the best and most efficient measures to insure the safety of the travelling community, and certainly no one can gainsay that to this office belongs the highest responsibility that can be placed upon man, for on his arrangements and acts depend the lives of thousands of individuals. I know that many Locomotive Superintendents do not for one moment give this important consideration a thought. All their aim is to show that they have been elevated, and to do this, too many of them become petty tyrants to those over whom they are placed. Such conduct, I am sorry to say, I have had too many occasions of observing. On the other hand, I am happy to state, that I know many Locomotive Superintendents who feel, and have expressed in my presence, the great responsibility that is attached to their situations, and who see with the deepest regret so many of their colleagues on other lines acting as if they regarded the life of a fellow-creature as nothing, compared with the "economy" they can show by the reduction of the wages of enginemen, firemen, fitters, and cleaners, in the pay-sheet of the shed. Such a person usually whispers into the ear of some miserly Director, that he saves so much more than his predecessors, and forthwith his "salary" is augmented by as much as, or more than, the amount of his starvation saving obtained from the working man, at the same time taking care to conceal that he has placed the lives of the public in jeopardy, and subjected the Company to heavy pecuniary loss by the destruction of the valuable machinery committed to his charge. I know well how this is managed by the "cooking" of the locomotive accounts, whereby the most expert Secretaries of England have been, and still are, deceived.

I had meant to take a retrospective view of last year's railway locomotive management, and the prospects of the present year, as I did in the first week of last January; but information has reached me that some important movements are in progress, and this has made me defer my letter for a few weeks, until the assembling of the great council of the nation; and I fix upon that particular period, because I have reason to believe that it is the intention of the Railway Department of the Board of Trade to apply for a special measure regarding the appointment and qualifications of engine-drivers. The plan in contemplation I must wholly deprecate; it would be complex and ineffectual, and only

lead to immense patronage. A complex establishment is perfectly unnecessary for the purpose of investigating the qualifications of engine-drivers. I could give the history of the greater part of them in England, and likewise the same history of all the Locomotive Superintendents (chief and petty), together with their respective qualifications and attainments.

I now come to the immediate business of this letter. In my last, I stated that I had little more to complain of on the Grand Junction Railway. I am satisfied that the Directors do not desire that imprudent measures should be resorted to; and although I have on various occasions differed from the opinions of the Board, still I must rank it as one of the best in England. I am only sorry that all their officers are not first-rate; and while upon this subject, I would recommend that they send forth an edict to Mr. Trevehick to put aside his dog and gun, and more assiduously apply himself to the interests of the Company by whom he is so well paid. The train referred to by your correspondent was not a passenger-train; it was a train of empty waggons. Nor was the train running at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour: the speed was under ten miles; and this was proved by the circumstance of stopping under sixty yards beyond the station. The driver had not power to run at the speed alleged, as both his fire and steam were down. It is true that the matter was looked over by the station-master. The engineman confessed he had been dozing. He is not one of the regular train-men; he is what on that line is called a turner, which means an extra engineman. There was no danger connected with the circumstance, as the mail-train had left the station fifteen minutes before. However, the matter was not hushed up; an investigation was instituted by the Board, and both men were called before them. In justice let us inquire what duty those extra men are subject to, and you will not be surprised that sleep should sometimes overtake them. For instance, an extra man at Birmingham goes on duty at 6 P.M.; he has to shift waggons and take goods up to the London station, and is employed in this manner up to 11.30 P.M., when he has to assist the goods' train to Wolverhampton. He then returns to Birmingham, and invariably has to assist the 2.15 A.M. goods'-train to Liverpool, reaching that place about mid-day. He is allowed no time for rest, but is ordered to return with empty waggons, so that these men are upwards of thirty hours on duty! Need it then, I say, be a matter of wonder that sleep should occasionally come upon them?

Since the occurrence in question, Mr. Trevehick has parted with one of his best and oldest enginemen; the man has been above seven years on the line, and has never been in the default-book. The parting with this man is not what I complain of; it is the putting on of an inexperienced driver to run the passenger-train from Crewe to Chester. He was never properly bred an engineman; I believe he once ran a train of soldiers from Liverpool to Birmingham, and that is the extent of his practice on the line.

In my last letter, I remarked on the impropriety of taking off pilot-engines, as subjecting passengers to delay and danger. An exemplification of this took place last week at Stafford. The day pilot-engine has been removed from that station for some time, and on the occasion referred to,



the inland mail-train and passengers were subjected to considerable delay. This train leaves Liverpool at 11 A.M., and reaches Birmingham at 3.20 P.M. On getting to Stafford the engine broke down, and they were obliged to remain there until the 1.30 P.M. train from Liverpool came up, which brought both trains on to Birmingham, after a delay of three hours to the mail-train. At the time this pilot-engine was taken from Stafford, a Government officer remarked, that if the mail were detained on any occasion from this cause, the Post-office authorities were determined to proceed against the Company. Whether this threat will be carried out, I cannot of course tell.

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### LETTER XXXIII.

Birmingham, April 15, 1845.

WHEN I wrote last, it was not my intention to address you again until I had fulfilled my promise of reviewing the railway locomotive management of last year, but having had several personal conversations regarding two assertions made in the letter referred to, I take the earliest opportunity of setting myself right with the public.

In the first place, I have been asked to specify in what respect the Managers of the locomotive department of the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway disregard the safety of the public? My answer to my private questioners was, that I had very frequently given decided proofs of it, and that I would go fully into the matter in my next letter, and explain my reasons. This did not satisfy the parties; and, therefore, I promised with your permission, that I would explain in your number of next Saturday. In doing so, I shall not occupy your space by introducing all the particulars I could have referred to at the time I wrote; I think I shall corroborate my assertion much better by referring to events subsequent to the date of my letter.

About a fortnight ago, as No. 26 engine, from Gloucester, was getting near the Defford station, a narrow escape from loss of life took place. It will be necessary to premise, that on this line the American engines have four small wheels, called bogie wheels, to a frame, independent of the engine frame, but fixed to it by a swivel-bolt (this frame is called the bogie, hence the name of the wheels). One of these wheels flew off while the engine was at full speed, the wheel, from its velocity, tearing up the other line; and the passengers were in much danger and greatly frightened. On the 4th instant, at Bromsgrove, the luggage-engine was, by mismanagement, left on the main line (not an uncommon thing) when a passenger-train was coming up. Mr. M'Connell was present, and from his usual "flurried" manner in giving directions to avert the impending danger, the engine was taken on to the siding, and thrown off the line. On the afternoon of the same day, by the same mismanagement, the bank-engine was thrown off the line; No. 34 engine, by a "pitch in" broke the buffer plank. On a subsequent day, when an engine was proceeding along at a rapid rate, the tender jumped off the line; the driver could not control the engine; on it proceeded,

dragging the tender by the edge of the embankment, until the draw-bolt broke. Again, betwixt Bromsgrove and Birmingham, one of the cylinders of the engine burst on the bank, causing alarm and much delay.

Thus, Sir, I have given undeniable proofs that my assertion was not in the least exaggerated; and, moreover, I may say that, however alarming the above statements may appear, the occurrences having taken place within so short a period, such mishaps are frequent. Mr. Allen, the foreman, blames Mr. M'Connell, and Mr. M'Connell, in his turn, blames the foreman. We have it from high authority, "that a house divided against itself cannot stand." On no other line in England are the engines in a worse state of repair, with the exception of the Midland.

At the great meeting of the shareholders of the Midland Company, held on Saturday last at Derby, Mr. Hudson (the Chairman) again noticed the irregularities that have existed on the line, and to which I have so repeatedly called the public attention. In my last letter I stated that they were in a great measure removed; but Mr. Hudson went too far when he said they were now "entirely removed." This is not the fact.

Dr. O'Bryen adverted (at the same meeting) to the decayed state of the sleepers on the Gloucester line, and to the expense of taking them up and relaying them. I called the attention of the Directors to this subject upwards of eighteen months ago, and was supported in my observations the following week by a correspondent of yours at Gloucester. Another proprietor wished for an explanation as to the state of the timber, when Mr. Bowly (the Gloucester Chairman) said, "the only portion of the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway in which there had been found any defect in the sleepers, was a length of about fifteen miles. Of that length, five miles had been relaid." I can assure that gentleman, that twice that length would not suffice to put the line in perfect safety. Is this not another decided proof of the apathy of the Directory of that line, as to the safe working of it, when nearly two years ago the greater proportion of the sleepers were found defective, and at that time many of them taken up were completely rotten, whereas in the interim only five miles have been made perfect!

I could go more fully into particulars regarding the permanent way of this line, but this letter was not intended for that purpose; I shall return to the subject in my next. I may just mention, with respect to Mr. M'Connell's *Great Britain*, that the day of exhibition is now postponed to the middle of July. From the resolutions of the three Companies, Mr. Matthew Kirtley will probably have a finger in this magnificent pie—certainly no great acquisition.

The second topic to which in the outset I referred, is as regards the removal of the pilot-engine from Stafford. I maintain that this is a loss to the Company, and that in the event of an accident to the train-engines, it would cause considerable delay to the passengers. I shall take a case in point that occurred lately, where delay would have occurred had it not fortunately happened that the train was unusually heavy, so that the pilot from Birmingham was ordered out with it. On

reaching Wolverhampton the train-engine broke down, and the pilot proceeded with the train. It was the 11.30 A.M., and if it had consisted of only twelve or thirteen carriages, no pilot would have been sent, and the delay would have been nearly three hours, for the train could not have proceeded until the pilot-engine came from Crewe, a distance of forty miles, and even although the 1.15 P.M. train into Birmingham had brought up the news of the break-down, a pilot from Vauxhall could have been very little earlier. A pilot-engine at Stafford would be a great pecuniary saving, besides conferring other advantages. When the Vauxhall pilot is ordered out with a heavy train, it must go all the way to Crewe, but if there were a Stafford pilot, the former need go no further than Wolverhampton, a distance of fourteen miles only, and return; for the train could easily run down the gradient to Stafford, and then the Stafford pilot would assist up the gradient to Whitmore, and return. The train would then proceed to Crewe, the gradients being principally in favour of that direction. The advantages would be similar to the trains from Liverpool; the Crewe pilot would assist only to Whitmore and return, instead of to Birmingham; on the train reaching Stafford it would require assistance only to Wolverhampton.

This Stafford pilot would likewise be able to assist the bank-engine at Stafford, the enginemen of which are invariably employed for a time equal to sixteen or seventeen days out of fourteen actual working days; which is by far too much fatigue for the men to be exposed to in all weathers. I need not dilate upon the impropriety of over-fatiguing enginemen. You will remember that Mr. Trevethick had a very good proof of this at Stafford, a short time ago, when both engineman and fireman passed the station asleep! The extra time now wasted by the bank-engine would go to the support of the pilot-engine; and the saving of the heavy expense of wear and tear and consumption of coke by the Crewe and Vauxhall pilots, would considerably more than overbalance the other part of the cost, each having only fourteen miles to run and return. I am given to understand that Mr. Trevethick perfectly agrees with me as to the propriety of a pilot being stationed at Stafford, but that he hates my "dictation." He and others have it in their power to avoid this if they choose; for I have no desire to dictate, if they will only, of their own accord, take a right course.

In a former letter I noticed, in treating of Mr. Trevethick's imprudence in putting on inexperienced men as engine-drivers, that if he persisted in retaining Butterworth after my admonition, Mr. Morris would have again reason to interfere. This prediction has been verified. Butterworth was recently proceeding down Whitson-bank, on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, with a train of goods. This incline is upwards of a mile long, and 1 in 95. The train broke loose about the middle, and when the engineman found this to be the case, instead of proceeding on as fast as he could, to get out of the way of the loose part of the train, which he was repeatedly signaled to do, he shut off his steam, put down the brake, leaped from the engine, and was still endeavouring to put down the brakes of the waggons, when the other part of the train came down, and made such a "pitch" in that several waggons were broken; one in particular, loaded with cotton goods, being completely smashed,

and the goods all strewed over the line. Butterworth had also a narrow escape with his life. I am not surprised that Mr. T. will not benefit at my "dictation," when such numerous and expensive lessons will not lead to his amendment.

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### LETTER XXXIV.

Birmingham, April 30, 1845.

IN your last week's paper a "Constant Reader" says, he is not competent to enter into a discussion of locomotive management with me, and solicits the aid of a former correspondent of yours at Liverpool. May I remind your "Constant Reader" that I formerly requested that correspondent to pause a little before he embarked further in the matter, and he seems to have followed my advice. That advice I now take leave to repeat, although I can assure the parties, be they who they may, that I am not afraid of their combined talent. At the same time I would whisper to them that some of the petty Superintendents on the London and Birmingham Railway would rather that I should not, as your "Constant Reader" wishes, analyse the locomotive working of that line. I confess there is much to praise; at the same time there is much that deserves censure. It is probable that I may have something to say of the working at Rugby in my next.

I must inform "Constant Reader" that no driver on the London line receives so much as 8*s.* per day. There are no more than 8 or 9 drivers upon it who receive the next highest rate to that, and they made a special bargain six years ago that they should have a progressive rise of 2*d.* per day for each year's servitude and good conduct. I think this a very judicious arrangement, but I very much doubt if the bargain has been carried out to the letter.\*

He asks me how many drivers there are who receive from 55*s.* to 60*s.* per week? I answer, not one, for a regular week's work. In some instances they have been known to get as much as 80*s.*, but care has always been taken that value has been received. I can assure "Constant Reader" that money is not thrown away upon that line on enginemen's wages, more than on any other line. If I am called upon I shall be able to show that on the average the men are rather underpaid than otherwise.

I shall very shortly trouble you with my promised letter; probably, in the interim, I may have something to reply to, which I shall endeavour to do in the manner you suggest, namely, in as "temperate" a way as the nature of the subject will admit.

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\* This bargain has since been carried out.

## LETTER XXXV.

Birmingham, June 18, 1845.

In a letter I addressed to you on the 23rd of January last, the following passages will be found :—"I had meant to take a retrospective view of last year's locomotive management, and the prospects of the present year, as I did in the first week of last January ; but information having reached me that some important movements are in progress, this had made me defer my letter for a few weeks, until the assembling of the great council of the nation. I fix upon that particular period because I have reason to believe that it is the intention of the Railway Department of the Board of Trade to apply for a special measure regarding the appointment and qualifications of engine-drivers." I can assure you the source whence I received the above information was one on which I could place implicit confidence. I have waited with patience, and watched the railway proceedings in Parliament with the utmost anxiety, but to my great astonishment not one single word respecting this important matter has escaped any one of Britain's assembled senators! Fully one-third of the time has been taken up about pounds, shillings, and pence ; treating as nothing the immense sacrifice of human life that has occurred in the course of so recent a period as last year—a number nearly approaching to two score. This apathy cannot arise from ignorance of the melancholy events, for it is now upwards of thirty months since I, aided by you, have been continually bringing those melancholy catastrophes before the public. Disasters of an appalling nature are still constantly occurring, as I shall show in the course of this letter, and yet all is treated by the Board of Trade and General Pasley with unbecoming indifference. What has the Railway Department of the Board of Trade been busied about for these many months? Why, Lord Dalhousie and his staff have been lending their aid to the most shameful and disgraceful system of Stock Exchange gambling that has ever appeared upon record since the notorious transactions of Lord Cochrane. The recklessness of human life induced by the imprudent acts of Locomotive Superintendents, forms, it seems, no part of the council of England's senatorial deliberation, although by a simple edict they could order a very easy, efficient, and not expensive, supervision of all the railways, which, if it had been previously resorted to, would have prevented most of the bye-gone and future disasters of this description.

The Railway Department of the Board of Trade has completely belied its name. It was originally intended that the Board should have a general Inspector under its control ; should examine all new railways before opening ; inspect continually all stations, carriages, engines, switchmen, level crossing keepers, &c. &c. ; and be particular that all those important items were in a proper state to ensure the safety of the public. In no instance has General Pasley or his predecessor been known to make a single minute inquiry, with the exception of leaving

London after life has been sacrificed, or taking a ride with Directors before the opening of a railway, on an appointed day fixed by those Directors, when everything is put "in apple-pie order," even to the brushing of the policemen's buttons,—an inspection which is a perfect farce, as I shall endeavour to convince you in the recent instance of the opening of the Peterborough Railway.

Excuse me, Sir, while I beg to differ with you in your announcement of that opening. General Pasley did *not*, in reality, inspect that line (or any other line in England), nor the staff of officers and men, who are appointed to give the working directions, and look after the safety of the public; if he had done so, he would have put his veto upon the opening at once. General Pasley *did* have a ride down the line along with some of the Directors and their friends, and sat down to a sumptuous collation, which was specially prepared for him, on their return to Wolverton. This, Sir, is the British inspection of a railway! I maintain that there cannot be a proper inspection unless the Inspector walk every inch of the line, and converse with every man, high and low, relative to the duties he has to perform—I mean those duties only which have relation to the public safety; otherwise than this, as I mentioned in a former letter, there is nothing in it but a name.

General Pasley, with the pompous title of "Government Inspector," is able (or his office is worse than useless) to examine the workmanship of a line, the embankments and cuttings, converse with station-masters, level crossing keepers, switchmen, &c. &c., while shut up in a carriage, and running at the rate of about forty miles per hour! There must be a peculiar charm in these words, "Government Inspector," which endows General Pasley with more than treble sight. And, in truth, Directors encourage him in the notion that he is possessed of this extraordinary talent (at the same time laughing in their sleeves), for upon the old gentleman making his appearance they flatter him into a belief that he is greater than royalty itself.

With your permission I thus give the details of *my* inspection of the Peterborough line, and you may rely upon its correctness. The line is well constructed as a single line, from Northampton to Peterborough. With that invaluable invention, the electric telegraph, attached to it, it is as perfect as can be, so far as it goes. Previous to the opening, the Directors, of necessity, had to leave all minor appointments to their two principal Superintendents, Mr. Bruyeres and Mr. Bury. These two gentlemen received orders to make the best appointments they could. Mr. Bury, with the prudence which generally characterises his management, selected the enginemen from amongst the oldest, most experienced, and most efficient men he had; and I must say, such a set of drivers as he has appointed may be equalled, but cannot be surpassed, in thorough knowledge of their duty. But, Sir, mark the contrast in the appointment by Mr. Bruyeres to the stations, and to regulate the working of the line, of men who know as much about the business as the line itself, thereby causing continual delays; and what is still worse, selecting men to be level crossing keepers who were not even so much as instructed as to the importance and responsibility attached to their situations! Above all other situations on a railway a level crossing

keeper should be the most experienced man that can be found, though such would not appear to be the opinion of Mr. Bruyeres. In a former letter I remarked that the principal qualifications for a railway servant, under a self-conceited Superintendent, are stupidity and ignorance. Mr. Bruyeres's head Superintendent is at Peterborough; and could you believe it, that this Superintendent learned his duties in the office of Mr. Bruyeres at Camden Town—above all the places in the kingdom perhaps the worst to arrive at that knowledge which is requisite! Mr. Bruyeres has on many occasions, to my personal knowledge, proved himself to be totally unfit for the office he holds. He has been upwards of four years on the line, and he remains as ignorant of the duties that belong to his situation as the first day he came upon it. Examples such as these are not few in the railway world of England. Mr. Bruyeres is pretty well backed by interest, otherwise he would never remain where he now is. He is possessed of one grand qualification, namely, when he commits a blunder (and they are innumerable), he generally manages to throw the blame off his own shoulders on to those of his neighbours; and he has the decided advantage of being close at hand to get the first word. If I am called upon, I shall prove my statements by numerous instances. I trust the Directors will remodel the staff of officers appointed by Mr. Bruyeres to the Peterborough line, otherwise they will soon suffer to a considerable extent in property, and the public will be in continual danger. I could have described much more minutely the cause of the repeated delays which have occurred, but I refrain for the present, in confidence that the London Directors will make it quite unnecessary for me to refer to this line again, with the exception of giving it all praise, as I am happy to say I can do in the case of the Warwick and Leamington, which is *now* worked with the utmost safety and regularity.

Before I proceed to other important topics, I beg leave to give a hint to Railway Directors generally, and seriously to press it upon their consideration, namely, to investigate the pay that is given to servants who hold responsible situations. In most instances, the pay is miserable indeed, and those individuals are compelled to appear as respectable in their dress as their superiors, who receive from eight to ten times the amount of income. This niggardly system presses severely upon the poor families at home, who are kept down at nearly starvation point, that the father of the family may appear like a gentleman, in order to retain his situation; while the man of 800*l.* or 1,000*l.* a year not seldom is not worth as many pence to the Company. To quote the words of a Railway Superintendent of long and high standing, spoken to me, "If I had the power to regulate the wages of responsible servants, I would make them such that they would put a value upon their situations, and place them above temptation." By such an arrangement the various Companies would ultimately become gainers.

In as brief a manner as possible I beg to call your attention to the locomotive management of this country. In a letter I addressed to you after my late tour over the principal railways (I have been over several since), I stated that measures were in progress to remedy the evils so long complained of. Certainly some of those evils are removed on many

of the lines, and strange as it may appear, Mr. Peter Clarke was the first to come forward to recommend the raising of the enginemens' wages 6*d.* per day, with a promise of an additional rise, upon good behaviour. He also increased the staff of watchmen to nearly the old standard, where he had imprudently removed them, and has now placed men for gate-keepers and switchers where he had women and boys. Even Mr. Cabrey has followed his example in some respects, but I would advise Mr. Cabrey not to carry out his intention upon the Hull and Selby, since Mr. Gray left that line. If he does, it will be fraught with the greatest evils. Other Superintendents have also had wisdom enough to walk in the footsteps of prudence. But, alas! to make up what they considered a great boon in the advance of wages, they have hit upon another plan, whereby they may more than overbalance what they have granted; a plan which, if persisted in, must have the effect of putting the lives of the public in the greatest jeopardy. It is this:—On some of the first lines the petty Superintendents, to obtain a "good name" (as they call it), enforce, as often as they have it in their power, from seventy-five to eighty hours' labour per week on the enginemens, exposed to all weathers! If it were not for the length to which it would extend this letter, I would enter particularly into this iniquitous system. If it be persisted in, I shall not fail to expose the names of all those who resort to it, and put the public on their guard not to be conveyed along rails where the enginemens and firemen are liable to be overtaken by sleep from absolute fatigue. If a proper inspection had been resorted to when the Railway Department of the Board of Trade was instituted, or even after I suggested so simple a method, it would have saved you trouble, and myself considerable expense, and many lives would have been spared. As it is, we remain as to our future safety just as we were, so far, at least, as Government interference goes.

When I gave you an outline of my late tour, I passed over the Manchester and Leeds line without making any particular observations upon it, because Mr. Fenton, the late Locomotive Superintendent, whose management I had repeated occasion to denounce, had just left, and was succeeded by a gentleman from the North, whose qualifications would soon be tested. I then withheld his name, and whence he came, for the purpose of giving him a fair chance. I knew that his former conduct on the Manchester and Bolton was by no means praiseworthy, but I hoped that he would mend. However, after three months and two weeks' trial he has shown himself not fit for the situation he now holds. I have not space in this letter to enter particularly into the whole of Mr. Jenkins's management; I shall merely mention that by his imprudence he has caused some of the best men that were on that line to leave, and in their place he was obliged to put on such men as he could get. Their qualifications and characters I shall give you in my next letter; suffice it for the present to say, that by the appointment of incompetent men, and during the short period of three months, he has had six dangerous collisions, an engine and tender tumbling over the embankment, and if it had not been for the lucky circumstance of the coupling-chain breaking, the whole train of passengers would have done so likewise. In that case life would inevitably have been lost, and General Pasley would *then*



have had a special inspection! When his experienced men gave notice, the reply of Mr. Jenkins was, "Never mind; let us get rid of all those prodigals. I shall get men to work night and day just as I choose, the same as I did on the Bolton line." While referring to this line I would also recommend that the Visiting Inspector should act with a little more prudence. I shall keep an eye upon this railway.

A short time ago I lauded Mr. Gooch, of the Great Western; since then he appears to have been mesmerised. It seems he is forgetting himself, and forgetting that he himself is only a servant. I would beg to impress upon his mind that when he gives a servant a character he should adhere strictly to the truth, and also that he should be more choice in his language towards his "inferiors."

Many of the first-rate hands on the Great Western had recently left, and some others had given notice, which circumstance reached the ears of the Board of Directors, and after making inquiry into the cause, they agreed that the men were not unreasonable, and in order that harmony should now prevail upon that line, which has always been the case until a very recent period, the Directors have ordered that all experienced enginemen above four years' standing shall have 7*s.* 6*d.* per day, and all under that, 7*s.* per day, and be paid for the Sunday when they are required to work on that day. I would call the attention of Railway Directors generally, and more particularly the Directors of the Liverpool and Manchester, and Grand Junction, to the decision of the Great Western Board; it is absolutely necessary at the present time, for, from the completion of several of the French railways, great temptations are held out for the picked men to go there. I know it to be a fact, that a number of the best men on the Liverpool lines are being induced to leave. I would request the Directors to make inquiry to know whether it would not be to their advantage and profit to follow the example of the Great Western, to give all their old hands an additional 6*d.* per day, rather than allow them to go abroad. "Allow them to go," the Superintendents say, "we can put on the firemen." True; but where is the certainty that those firemen will ever attain to be as good drivers. They ultimately may; but look at the additional quantity of coke that will be consumed before they become as experienced as the present hands. It has been declared by all the most experienced Railway Engineers, that it is only long practice that makes a good engineman. If this hint be not taken, I can assure the Directors of those two lines that they will repent it when too late, for the French contractors are determined to have men from the Liverpool and Grand Junction almost at any price.

My attention was particularly arrested by the letter which appeared in your paper the week before last, from an engine-driver on the Paris and Rouen Railway; the more so because it threw out severe reflections on Mr. Buddicombe, who, when he was Superintendent on the Grand Junction, was much respected and esteemed by his superiors and inferiors—so much so, that when he left that line a splendid entertainment was given him by the locomotive men, and at the same time he was presented with a valuable timepiece. Where is now his gratitude? I some time ago remarked how astonishingly the difference of situations

alters men's minds. On the Grand Junction Mr. Buddicombe was but a servant; on the Paris and Rouen he is a contractor for the working of the locomotive department. After I read the "Engineman's" letter, I made inquiry to learn if the complaints were well-founded, and much surprised I was to find that Mr. Buddicombe had become a perfect tyrant, and that this may be said also of his assistant, Mr. Wilson, at Sutteville, whom I would recommend to give no cause for further observations. Mr. Buddicombe, it seems, wishes to "gag" the men. If they endeavour to expostulate with him upon the hardships he subjects them to, he gives them for answer, "If you don't like it you may leave it." He has been paying men off because they stated their complaint to some of the Directors, using the term that he would be *revenged* of the others if they breathed a word. Again, when complaint was made as to the long hours they were compelled to be out, causing them to be so much fatigued that they were liable to be overtaken by sleep, he said he would go to England and bring over *cast-iron* men, who would stand the fatigue. I believe he is in England at the present time, endeavouring to get *cast-iron* men, as he styles them; but I am afraid he will find a difficulty in procuring them. I have no doubt he may be able to obtain men, but not such as he has at present, for a better set of men is not to be found anywhere. It appears to me, from what I can learn, that he intends to make a "North Midland" affair of the Paris and Rouen. In the meantime, I would recommend to the Directors to institute a rigid inquiry, and know where the fault lies that is creating so much dissatisfaction. I am confident that if they do not, the French Government will not remain so apathetic as the British Government; *they* will interfere, and I trust they will do so before human life is sacrificed to gratify the whims or save the pockets of the locomotive contractors.

I intended to go into some important particulars relative to the conduct of Captain Charlewood, Superintendent of traffic on the South-Eastern, in stepping out of his own duty, and interfering with that of which he knows nothing. It is reported that Mr. Benjamin Cubitt, the present Locomotive Superintendent, is to leave, and that Captain Charlewood has an eye to the situation. My next letter will appear before such an appointment can be made, and I shall give my opinion of Captain Charlewood's qualifications for so important an office. I intend to visit that line in the course of a week or two.

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## LETTER XXXVI.

Birmingham, July 28, 1845.

IN my last letter I intimated an intention of paying a visit to the various railways around London. That visit I have paid, but not to the extent I meant in the outset, although I remained several days longer than the time prescribed. I shall endeavour to give you an outline of my travels.

My attention was first drawn to the Great Western Railway, particu-

larly from reading the Report of Major-General Pasley, relative to the late "express" accident on that line. I had doubts as to the correctness of the Inspector-General's conclusions, for I have repeatedly shown that the manner in which he goes about his inquiries cannot be the proper one for arriving at the truth. On his arrival at any station, he is met by the principals, and is speedily conveyed to the place of accident, where he looks around him—then dines with as many of the Directors as may be at hand—they tell their story to him—he notes it down, and it is published to the world, under the high-sounding signature, "G. W. Pasley, Major-General, and Inspector of Railways!" In the Report referred to, the General states that it was the four-wheeled van next to the tender that in the first instance went off the line, dragging the train after it; and he asserts that, in consequence of having four wheels only, and from the high velocity, it was impossible that the van could keep upon the rails. Now, if the General be correct in this instance, how does he account for all the other four-wheeled express-trains on other lines keeping the rails? They run at the same speed, and no accident has yet taken place with any of them, whereas there have been two on the Great Western. His assertion is absurd, as I shall endeavour to show. I put myself to considerable trouble to arrive at the truth.

In the first place, the four-wheeled van next the tender never went off the rails; it maintained the same position as the engine and tender when all the four carriages went off the line. For the correctness of this I refer the General to Robert Harle, the engineman, and also to the policeman who was an eye-witness of the catastrophe: it follows that the van could not have been the cause, as stated in the Report.

Secondly. The position of the carriages, after the disaster, fully proves that General Pasley was misled. The two second-class carriages next the van only turned over on the side; the last carriage in the train, a first-class, did exactly the same; but mark what occurred to the third carriage in the train. It went off the line with the greatest velocity over the embankment, which is from twelve to thirteen feet, making several summersets, and then rested on the field with the wheels upmost! This carriage was the cause, but in the second degree only.

Thirdly. The *real* cause was the ineffective state of the line, which was out of gauge. I know as a fact, that between Dargley-gate and Dog-kennel-bridge, numerous engine-springs have been broken from the line being out of gauge, and the wheels coming in contact with the chairs. The General, in his Report, so far verifies this, for he states, that the line was defective at this part, and that material was actually laid down for the purpose of relaying it. In this particular instance he convicts himself of the very charge I have so often brought against him, for he says that Mr. Seymour Clarke, Superintendent of the carriage department at Paddington, "*told him so!*"

Fourthly. I can tell you, Sir, that long since many parts of the Great Western line were continually getting out of gauge, the cause of which I shall point out. Mr. Brunel, to make assurance doubly sure, thought that if he drove piles along the line of rails, and then laid the longitudinal sleepers upon them, the sleepers would be considerably

stiffer, and that he would be enabled to lay down very light rails. It turned out that those piles became an evil, for, according to the nature of the ground, the piles gave way irregularly; consequently the line at those places was continually getting out of gauge. This part of the line had been relaid bit by bit, with the exception of the place above referred to; and yet the "Inspector-General of Railways" of England, knows nothing of its condition, until an accident takes place, and then he adopts the *ipse dixit* of an official!

Does not this single fact prove what I have so often stated, that our Government General Inspector of Railways never knew, does not know, and never will know, the proper state of any line or its management, until some serious and fatal accident occurs, and then he flourishes forth with a "remedy?" I maintain, that true safety will never be arrived at until we have an Inspector continually travelling on the lines, and performing his duties in the manner I many months ago pointed out. I shall, Sir, with your permission, continue to "give line upon line, and precept upon precept," until this important object is attained.

Mr. Brunel's immense theoretical genius has almost always led to a failure in practice. For instance, the first engines he brought on the line could not carry themselves along, and his grand construction of a waggon-frame to run upon either the broad or narrow gauge, has likewise proved a failure. The reckless manner in which it was tried was most culpable. It was attached to the tender of a third-class train at Swindon, with particular instructions given to the engineman, by Mr. Appleby, Superintendent at that place (I shall refer to this gentleman by-and-bye), that above all he was not to neglect the oiling of the machinery of this experimental carriage or waggon-frame. Before going farther, it may be necessary to premise, that this frame has hollow axles, to extend and retract at pleasure, to suit any gauge. The train proceeded. On reaching within a mile and a-half of Didcot, one of the set-pins dropped out; and the consequence was, that this experimental thing turned right over off the rails, dragging with it the carriage next to it, tearing asunder the carriage containing many passengers, so much that the panels fell out. The line was blocked up for one hour and twenty minutes, but most miraculously not a single individual was bodily hurt. If Mr. Brunel had confidence in his invention, why did he not attend the trial of it, and take his seat upon it, and have thus shown the passengers that he believed there was no danger in taking it along with them? If he had ordered it to be attached to a first-class train, in which were some of the nobles of the land, the censure would have been far and wide. It appears that on the Great Western any dangerous experiment may be tried with a third-class train, because the life of a third-class passenger seems to be considered of about as much value as that of an Irish pig. If I were to notice half of the expensive vagaries of Mr. Brunel on this line, the statement would fill a number of your journal.

I cannot, however, leave the Great Western without seriously calling Mr. Brunel's attention to the alteration that has taken place in Mr. Daniel Gooch's management—an alteration hostile to the interests of the Company and the safety of the passengers. Mr. Brunel must know that

to work the line efficiently, and with safety, it must be done by experienced engine-drivers. Little as I profess to know about the business, I am sure, nay, I have on many occasions witnessed, that a good practical man can work an indifferent engine, while, on the other hand, I have seen an inexperienced man unable to proceed with the best of engines, and that in a few days he has rendered it completely useless. (There was sufficient evidence of this on the North Midland.) Mr. Gooch, within a short time, has, by his new measures, lost the services of many of the very best men; and at this moment, he has not a sufficient number of good and effective hands to work this extensive line in safety. I have much more to state regarding this line, to which I wish to call the attention of the Directors; but I have already devoted too much of this letter to it. Three important points, however, must not be unnoticed; the first is with reference to the continued danger the 12.25 p.m. mail-train passengers are subjected to. On approaching Chippenham, the goods'-train, which precedes by about two hours, is, from the incline, and wet state of Box tunnel, often retarded; and before it can reach Chippenham the mail-train comes up, and there is a very sharp curve, so that the engineman cannot see 200 yards before him. No signalman is placed at this curve by night, although there is one by day. In my opinion, a night one is far more essential, for many collisions have taken place here at night. The second and third cases alluded to are the unnecessary delays at the Bath station, and the ineffective signals at Box and Chippenham.

The Eastern Counties' line, under the management of Mr. Fairniough, is in much better condition than formerly. It will soon experience greater improvement. The Company have a supply of new engines, and fortunately the line has been lately reinforced by several picked enginemen from the Great Western. After the extension is carried out, and the arrangements are completed, and each man is acquainted with his new place, this line will be second to none in England for safety and efficiency.

The Dover, Croydon, and Greenwich lines I next visited. At New Cross station, the general arrangements of which I cannot too much commend, I examined most minutely the whole establishment under Mr. Benjamin Cubitt. His works (and engines particularly) are in the highest order possible. It is much to be regretted, for the sake of the Dover Company, that he has given in his resignation. I can assure the Directors, that his place is not likely to be soon filled so well. Like Mr. Josiah Kearsley, he is no upstart Superintendent; he is able effectively to do an engineer's work. I happened to be on the station at the time he passed with the train containing the King of the Belgians. He was not merely nominally the engineman—as is generally the case when royalty is in a train—he was there on the foot-plate with his fireman, doing the duty, and he accomplished the journey in grand style.

This gentleman is to be succeeded by a Mr. Cudworth, from Newcastle, appointed by Mr. Stephenson. He is the son of a rich Quaker, who, it is rumoured, has paid for the appointment. I hope, for the honour of all parties, that this report is unfounded. Whatever may be

his qualifications as a theoretical engineer, the selection is very injudicious for such an extensive station. I very much fear he will not be found the proper person to step into the shoes of Mr. Cubitt, though certainly he will have one great advantage upon entering on his arduous duties—he will have 120 engines in the highest state of repair, and a full complement of the best selected enginemen in the kingdom. Mr. Cubitt need not fear to match them as a body with any other to the same extent, in thorough knowledge of their duty, and, above all, steadiness and sobriety.

I would caution Mr. Cudworth, on entering upon his new situation, not to be misled by the empty and foolish notions of Captain Charlewood, otherwise he will be led into irretrievable difficulty, and his employers will be put to an enormous expense. I can assure him that the vain show of saving a few shillings each week in the pay-sheet, has been, in innumerable instances, the cause of the loss of thousands of pounds. I shall be very watchful over this appointment, for I am very jealous of its character.

I must express my approbation of the management of Mr. C. H. Gregory, at Croydon. The arrangement of the Greenwich engine-shed must not be omitted. The engines are in the most beautiful condition I ever witnessed, and the selection of enginemen must be the best; in experience they cannot be outstripped, having been on the Liverpool and Manchester at the opening, in the days of the *Rocket*, &c. &c. I cannot leave these lines without complimenting Mr. Pulford, the Secretary of the locomotive department, New Cross. I examined the whole of his arrangements, and they are very superior. He is most assiduous in his duties, and for suavity of manner presents a desirable example for many other railway officers.

I have often intended to notice the absurdities in the Birmingham shed, and I cannot overlook the present instance, it is so glaring, though I do not mean to cast the smallest reflection on Mr. Bury, for I know he has been deceived, and that the qualifications of individuals have been misrepresented. On Wednesday last, Mr. Johnston, the Superintendent, left on leave of absence, and he has placed a fitter of the name of Palmer to superintend the repairs of the engines—a duty he is totally unfit for. None know the qualifications of Palmer better than I do. Some time ago he did little or nothing in the shed but make “galvanic rings.” The rage for these being over, he has taken to the drawing of profiles; and all strangers (and they are many, for this shed, unlike all others on the line, is a perfect thoroughfare) who enter must sit for their likeness, to the amusement of the whole establishment. A man of the name of Tibbits, who has got the charge of the outgoing of the engines, fills up the interim time with theological discussions—a very unfitting theme, one would think, for such a place! This system must be altered, otherwise a history of the getting up of a galvanic ring manufactory, and obtaining subscriptions for erecting a Baptist chapel gallery, will be brought forth. May I also give Mr. Bury a hint, that arrangements have for some weeks been contrived to cajole him into another ridiculous appointment.

I beg to inform Captain Huish, Secretary of the Grand Junction

Railway, that whatever may be *his* opinion of the general arrangements at the Birmingham station, under the able management of Captain Eboral, I can affirm they are not to be surpassed in the kingdom. I am often on this station when the greatest bustle prevails upon the arrival of the London trains, and in the course of a minute or two all is arranged. Captain Eboral is most assiduous and ever in attendance, both at arrivals and departures. It is my opinion that Captain Huish prefers being in a bustle; if so, why does he not take up his residence in Birmingham? I know he could be very well spared at Liverpool—in fact, the Company would be gainers if he were superseded.

On my arrival at home I was astonished to find that an individual had been sent by Captain Huish from Liverpool to be a spy on this station, at a salary of 100*l.* a-year, under pretence that he was to fill Mr. Dowling's place, though no such appointment was necessary, for an additional inspector had been appointed some time before Mr. Dowling left. If Mr. Dowling's place *did* require to be filled up, ought not one to have been selected who knew how to perform the duty?

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#### LETTER XXXVII.

Birmingham, August 27, 1845.

It was not my intention to address you again until I had completed my last visit for the season to the eastern lines; but from repeated conversations with several of your readers relative to the very many serious accidents which have taken place since the date of my last, I am induced, at the request of these parties, to trouble you at present. Before entering upon the subject, however, I think it only right to premise that not one of these accidents occasioned me the least surprise, for I had in a great number of instances predicted that the catastrophies of the most direful description might be looked for, and in no single instance have I been mistaken. Were it not that it would occupy too much of your valuable space, I could select a number of passages from my former letters, which many of your present readers may not have seen, and these extracts would have satisfied them on this point. Sir Robert Peel spoke in the House of Commons immediately after the collision at Camden Town in almost the same words as I had used to General Pasley upwards of two years ago, namely, that if greater safety to the travelling public were not ensured, the day must arrive when the Government would be compelled to interfere to secure that desirable end. I am of opinion that an edict from her Majesty's Cabinet would be quite sufficient without waiting for the re-assembling of Parliament. It requires no extensive or complicated measure. It is certainly incumbent upon Government to resort to every means in their power to prevent such calamities as are daily taking place. In a letter I addressed to you some months ago, calling your attention to the present locomotive management of this country, I concluded "that we remain as to our future safety just as we were, so far as Government interference goes." It is certainly lamentable that notwithstanding the sacrifice of life, and

the daily jeopardy the travelling public are continually subjected to, not a single measure has been devised as to how greater safety is to be arrived at. The above quotation is as applicable at the present moment as it was at the time it was written.

From what I have said in condemnation of the surveys of Major-General Pasley, the public cannot but observe how futile it is for Government to keep so unqualified a person in a position so responsible. I confess I have many times been severe in my remarks on this functionary, but was I not fully justified? In no instance have I been so severe upon him as he was upon himself in giving his evidence at the inquest on the body of the stoker killed on the Eastern Counties' line. A greater piece of *bombast* never was spoken by man. General Pasley is reported to have said in effect what I have on many occasions asserted, that there is nothing in his "Inspectorship" but a name. He said it would take him two or three months to examine all the rails of any given line. What of that? Suppose it took him double that time; if it were but to save the life of one fellow-creature, such an inspection would be well applied, and must be resorted to, and that too before long. For instance, the accident that occurred on Tuesday, the 19th, on the same line, and to which I shall presently refer, bears out the necessity of this. I should be glad to know what the General is paid for. It is not merely to take a trip now and then with Railway Directors, and to partake of a sumptuous repast. General Pasley must think the public possessed of an immense share of gullibility to rest contented with his drawing his thousands from the public purse without rendering an equivalent service. He said he examined all bridges carefully. Now, I should like to know what his opinion is of the bridges on the Gloucester line, in the neighbourhood of Birmingham; I wonder if he ever examined the ricketty propping which prevents them from tumbling down. He said he had an assistant. I know he has an assistant in his private office at Whitehall, but I never knew or heard of him being engaged in a railway inspection. Sir, I must recall to your remembrance the General's inspection of the Derby Junction, when he reported that line to be in perfect condition, when, at the same time, it was no such thing, four miles of it being temporarily laid. If life had been sacrificed on the relaying, how would the General have got over that inspection? A fatal accident was by far more likely to take place there than on the Eastern Counties'. I maintain, and I have no hesitation in publicly asserting, that General Pasley is quite unfit for the important duties of his office. His age alone would be sufficient, independent of his want of mental and physical energy. He gave sufficient proof of this by his evidence upon the "Tay Ferries" at Dundee, in respect of which you may perhaps remember the Editor of the *Dundee Advertiser* took him pretty well to task. What could the General have been dreaming of when he said he did not consider it necessary to examine all the lines minutely to be satisfied of their safety? Upon the very same principle what would he say to his groom if he allowed the shoes of his horse to get so much out of order as to cause the animal to stumble, and break the General's leg—what would he think were the groom to say he did not consider it necessary to be so minute in his inspection?



No doubt he would discharge his servant; and I contend that, as a servant of the public, General Pasley himself ought to be discharged, for (on his own showing) utter disregard of providing for the public safety. The press from one end of the kingdom to the other has been loud in its censure of him. I trust it will continue to be so, until a change for the better takes place. It appears quite evident that nothing will rouse the Government but the press, and I know that there is a power of the greatest weight, which requires only a proper direction to be available against evils—the power of public opinion. Should we not then appeal to that power for humanity's sake?

In the course of his evidence the General said, he had often travelled many miles at the rate of forty to fifty miles an hour when he inspected a line, and yet the accident already referred to he attributed to over-speed, and to the curve, the incline, and the outside rails of the curve being too low! Now, the speed was proved not to exceed thirty-five miles an hour, and the Inspector-General could not tell what was the radius of the curve, nor the height of the rails! Of course not, for he had not measured either the one or the other; all he desires is to keep out of view the fallacy of his Reports, invariably throwing the blame, right or wrong, on the engine or engineman, as he did unjustly on the engineman at Camden station, as I shall presently have occasion to show. Compare the accident on which I have been commenting with the one that took place on Tuesday, the 19th, when the engine and tender were overturned into a deep ditch. Fortunately no lives were lost, but no thanks to the General for his precautions. The engine was a new one, of the same description as the one at the former accident, and was made by Slaughter and Stodhert, of Bristol, and the character of this accident completely overturns every part of the General's evidence on the former occasion. The part of the line where the last occurred was a dead level, and as straight as a line can be for miles, and the speed did not exceed twenty miles per hour. On examining the rails after the accident, it was found that the rails must have been apart at the joint for more than half-an inch, and the square flange of the wheels scratching the joint cut a piece off the rails of about three inches long. This is completely explained by the diagram in your last week's paper, to which I beg to refer your readers. It is quite plain that it was the joint that made the engine leap and threw it off the line with such violence. How the General will reconcile his former opinion with the conclusions at which he will be obliged to arrive on the present occasion, I know not. In this instance he will not find over speed, a curve, incline, or the rails too low on one side. He will find no cause but a bad joint, which was the sole cause of the accident on both occasions. I am not inclined to go so far as has been done in absolutely condemning Slaughter and Stodhert's flange as the actual cause; from what must have been the state of these joints, the same calamity would have befallen any other flange. Be this as it may, there can be no doubt that the whole responsibility must be upon the shoulders of General Pasley, and his ridiculous and superficial inspections. He asserts, that he is quite competent to report upon the safety of a line, though shut up in a carriage, and running at the rate of forty miles an hour; accordingly he reported

these lines perfect, while the contrary has been found to be the fact. On the 20th, the evening after the accident, he made his appearance at the hotel in Ely, to commence his inquiry in his usual manner. He was waited on by engineers and others, who only knew of the accident by report, and having heard their story, repaired next morning to the place, exactly two nights and a day after the accident; thus giving plenty of time for the line to be put in proper order, and the joints all examined for a considerable distance each way: and he will report to Lord Dalhousie that no line is in better condition than that from which the engine went off! Of course he will have no other resource but to throw the entire blame upon the flange. But, Sir, can any Report of General Pasley's after this have any effect in satisfying the public mind? If this line had been inspected upon my principle, by a proper person, neither of those accidents would have taken place, for much greater care would be resorted to by contractors, that the joints were properly fixed, knowing, as they would, that their appointments would be scrutinised. Does it not now become important that the whole of this line should undergo a proper inspection? From every inquiry I have made, no fault can be attached to any part of the locomotive management in the slightest degree.

Mr. Bruyeres, of the London and Birmingham Railway, made quite as foolish an affair of his evidence before Mr. Wakley as the General did before Mr. Lewis. In a former letter I stated that Mr. Bruyeres had, on many occasions, to my personal knowledge, proved himself totally unfit for his office; and I intimated that, under a continuance of his management, an accident must soon occur. Mr. Bruyeres has since shown the public that I was right, and I assure you his conduct has not passed unobserved, for Mr. Wakley declared at the close of Mr. Bruyeres' evidence, that he might be, as he stated, the head Superintendent on the London and Birmingham Railway in name, but he certainly was not a Superintendent in practice. So convinced was Mr. Wakley of this, that he repeated it over again to the jury. My reason for referring to this accident more particularly, is to endeavour to prove the injustice that was done to James Undsworth, the engineman, by Mr. Bruyeres and General Pasley, in throwing the whole blame of the occurrence upon him, and in causing his discharge. I shall prove, Sir, that the man did nothing on that occasion that was not regularly sanctioned by almost all the Superintendents in the kingdom, and by General Pasley also. In doing this, I wish you clearly to understand, that it is not my intention to denounce the locomotive management of this line or any other line, with reference to the point on which I shall lay most stress, nor is it my intention to praise the engineman above his deserts. I am not personally acquainted with him, although I know he has enjoyed for upwards of seven years as good a character for an experienced engineman as any on the line. It is the evidence and the principle on which he was discharged that I find fault with, his discharge having no tendency to do good to the community, to say nothing of the cruelty of General Pasley's penalty in disqualifying the man from ever again driving an engine in England.

In taking a review of Mr. Bruyeres' evidence at Camden Town, I

shall be as sparing of your space as possible. His principal aim was to show that Undsworth was an irregular driver, and he brought forth a month's statement to prove it. That statement was found to be incorrect to a considerable extent, and an explanation was called for by the Coroner. Mr. Bruyeres could not explain, but said he would send for the original reports, and upon being examined, Undsworth's statement was found to be correct, and Mr. Bruyeres' wrong. Mr. Bruyeres was asked how many carriages there were in the train. He said he could not tell exactly. When pressed to be particular as to the number, he said he would make inquiry, and he found there were seven. He was again asked to whom the carriages belonged, but he could not answer the question without making another inquiry. He was then asked the price of a first-class carriage; he said about 250*l.*—which is not half its real value. He was asked to whom the enginemmen and guards gave their reports. He could not "tell exactly;" his general order was, they should be left at his office. He was asked, in the event of several passengers arriving at any station just before the bell rang for starting, and the trains were detained ten minutes, what the engine-driver was to do? Was he ordered to bring up his lost time? He could not say; he had nothing to do with *that!* "You have nothing to do with that," remarked the Coroner, "and yet you bring an enginemman up for not keeping his exact time!"

You will observe, Sir, that through the whole course of his examination, Mr. Bruyeres was prepared with nothing except the allegation that Undsworth was an irregular driver, and on this point the evidence he brought forward was found to be incorrect. Mr. Bruyeres made another charge against the driver, that he had been fined on a previous occasion for coming in too early with his train. Now, he never was so fined, nor any other driver on the line, with the exception of one, and that was upwards of four years ago.

The point on which hinges the injustice done to Undsworth is this:—It was the regular and understood practice that all the enginemmen were to make up their loss of time, and likewise to arrive as much before time as possible. There is not an enginemman on the London line who did not endeavour always to be in before time. It was regularly practised and countenanced by all the Superintendents, high and low; and the enginemmen piqued themselves on it, because they were aware that their dexterity was estimated thereby. As a proof of this I would ask Mr. Parker, of Wolverton, how many men he changed on No. 17 and No. 24 engines because they could not come in with the express-train fifteen or twenty minutes before time. This over-speed was sanctioned when Mr. Parker himself and Mr. Bury were on the foot-plate. And yet James Undsworth is publicly condemned by General Pasley and Mr. Bruyeres for acting in conformity with the usual practice of the line, as encouraged by his masters of all grades, Mr. Bruyeres not excepted. Sir, I cannot see that any blame can be attached to the locomotive management in this instance; the whole blame of that melancholy affair rests with the luggage department. In the first place, the evidence of the luggage enginemman justifies this conclusion, and in the second place, the inefficiency of the signals between the station and the tunnel in

foggy weather ; and, as a matter of course, this inefficiency must be attributed to Mr. Bruyeres alone, for the whole of the signals, and men who have the charge of them, are under his peculiar care. From this charge he cannot escape, for if his arrangements had been perfect the accident would not have happened ; Undsworth would have been still in his place, and the old system of extra speed would never have been interfered with.

On no line has the plan of not coming in before time been more rigidly carried out than on the Grand Junction, and yet the men are many times at a loss how they should act, from the interference of officials, and especially of Captain Huish. A short time since, the express-train arrived at Crewe six or eight minutes before time. The engineman was waiting for the proper time to start, when the Captain called to the guard to know the cause of stopping. "Time not up, Sir." "—— the time," was the rejoinder, "go on as fast as you can." The engineman did so, and completed the forty-three and a-half miles in forty-five minutes.

General Pasley, who represents the Government in matters of railways, has always given his sanction to extra speed, both with special engines or otherwise ; at all events, I never read a Report from him against it. Now, Sir, it seems to me that the General can ride through an Act of Parliament (Lord Seymour's) ; at all events, he rides through a Standing Order of all Boards, which is, that no engine or train shall proceed past any station above the rate of ten miles an hour. Mr. Bruyeres issued an order from his office to that effect ; and yet he comes down in the express-train, and past the stations against his own order, at a greatly increased speed. How inconsistently do Superintendents act ! And no Superintendent ever acted with so much imprudence as Mr. Bruyeres. At one time he was in the practice of ordering a special engine and carriage to convey him up and down the line at pleasure, and without giving orders for the proper signals. This system he carried on until he nearly lost his own life, and the lives also of a whole train of passengers, in Kilsby tunnel. It was owing solely to the presence of mind of the engineman that he has not long since been "off the line," in a sense for which, with all his inefficiency, I should really be sorry.

I have caused considerable offence by giving you a hint as to the absurdities in the Birmingham shed, because the manufacture of the rings and pictures is stopped. There are further alterations still wanting ; and I can assure Mr. Johnstone and his *protege*, Palmer, that all the influence they are possessed of with Mr. Bruyeres will amount to nothing. I have convinced gentlemen of much higher standing than either of them that they will never arrive at the source of my information, although Palmer says he has put Mr. Bruyeres in possession thereof. Palmer is quite welcome to call Mr. Bruyeres his friend, as he says he is proud of doing. For my own part, I think Mr. Bury is his best friend, in allowing him to carry on a private manufactory in a public establishment ; and I think Mr. Bruyeres has quite sufficient to attend to, without taking under his care any locomotive shed whatever. I have not done with this gentleman ; I still have something of very great

importance affecting the public safety to bring against him. In conclusion, I beg to say that I never found any Superintendent who had nothing to fear, that cared to whom I might talk. I have known many instances where there was cause for exposure, and in these there was always alarm.

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### LETTER XXXVIII.

Birmingham, September 12, 1845.

WITH respect to a late occurrence on the Chester and Birkenhead Railway, although it did not prove fatal, it was little less than miraculous that a sacrifice of life did not take place to a great extent. I maintain that the whole blame must be attached to Mr. H. Watson, the Locomotive Superintendent of that line; and to establish this I shall take a review of his management, which will clearly sustain my allegation. Towards the latter end of last year Mr. Yarrow gave notice that he was to leave the line, having been appointed Engineer of the Birkenhead Docks, and an advertisement appeared in the papers that a Locomotive Superintendent was wanted on the Chester and Birkenhead Railway. At the time Mr. Watson was an assistant-draughtsman at Crewe station, and by the influence of Trevethick and others with Mr. Jackson, who is the Chairman, (or, I may rather say, the whole Directors in one,) Mr. Watson was immediately selected, without comparing his qualifications with those of other candidates. He had not been many weeks in office when he began to discharge the most efficient and valuable men whom Mr. Yarrow had appointed, remarking at the time, that it would be much better to get rid of the old hands, and have only those whom he himself had appointed, and adding, that he should take care that *his* management should never be exposed in the railway papers! He first removed a driver who had been on the line from its commencement, and one in whom Mr. Yarrow had placed great confidence, and next followed another dismissal of the same description. In the place of one of those discharged drivers he put a man named Henry Whitaker, who had not been bred an engineman, and who but a few months before was an omnibus-conductor. The expense which this man has caused to the Company is incalculable. Under him the *Commodore* engine, which had received an extra repair by Tyleurs, of Warrington, did not run many weeks. He next got the *Zillah* engine, and in a few days he strained the eccentrics and straps so much that the engine became useless; and he did the same with the *Druid* engine. He then got a new and powerful engine, the *Birkenhead*, made by Jones and Potts of Newton, and even that he run only one month, when it became useless from total neglect. Mr. Watson, to save himself and his omnibus-conductor from the disgrace that attached to them, reported the engine to be badly constructed; but the eminent makers were not to be thus disposed of, and they requested Mr. Deurance, of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, to examine the engine, and report his opinion thereon. Mr. Deurance did so, and on examining the fire-box

he found 250 of the stays strained three eighths of an inch, so much so, that the top of the fire-box had come down to a dangerous extent. Mr. Deurance was of opinion that the engine had been pressed too much. After this the omnibus engineman whispered it about that it was the fault of the night watchman, in having put fire into the engine without water; but even if this had actually been so, the charge against Mr. Watson of neglect and mismanagement remains unchanged; for this night watchman knew nothing of an engine, having been there only a few weeks, and thus valuable property was entrusted to a man who knew nothing at all of the business. Mr. Watson was still determined to have all the blame thrown upon the makers, and accordingly employed Mr. Kennedy, of the firm of Messrs. Curtis and Kennedy, of Liverpool, to examine the engine on his part. Mr. Kennedy, however, is a gentleman far too honourable to make a false report; and he gave the same opinion as Mr. Deurance had given on the part of the makers. Mr. Watson had threatened an action against Messrs. Jones and Potts, if Mr. Kennedy's report should be favourable to him; the contrary being the case, he wisely dropped his threat, and thus saved the Company no small amount of money. I could give much farther evidence of Mr. Watson's incapacity as a Superintendent, but I fear trespassing too far on your space. I could refer to the *Touchstone*, which is lying in the shed useless, in consequence of contemplated alterations, which neither he nor anybody else could ever carry out. As his last refuge, he complains of want of stock; but the stock is greater than it was under Mr. Yarrow. Mr. Yarrow worked the line at an expense of 11½*d.* per mile, while Mr. Watson's rate is above 1*s.* 6*d.* per mile, so that the traffic must increase above two-thirds to make up for Mr. Watson's management. From the change of enginemen, 6*lb.*, 10*lb.*, and 13*lb.* per mile more coke are consumed than by the men under Mr. Yarrow; as, for instance, the *Worrall* engine never exceeded 18 or 20*lb.* per mile, and now, under Mr. Watson, it consumes from 30 to 40*lb.* per mile. In order to blind the Directors and cover the blunders of his supposed improvements in the consumption of coke, he lumps all together, and then takes the average. What has become of all Mr. Jackson's great anxiety for the welfare of this concern?

I shall now refer to the accident which took place on the morning of Friday, the 29th ultimo. Evan Edwards, driving the *Commodore*, left Chester with the 6 A.M. train; James Clayton, driving the *Druid*, was ballasting, and was directed to follow out the train cautiously, the morning being foggy. About four minutes after the passenger-train started, Clayton followed at the same speed as if the line had been clear before him, and exactly one mile from Chester "pitched" into the passenger-train with great violence, throwing the passengers against each other, to the disfigurement of their faces, and smashing the waggons behind him. Sir, you will be surprised when I inform you that Clayton was not brought before the Directors for this reckless act; Mr. Watson contented himself with fining him 20*s.*! Mr. Watson, no doubt, was afraid that the Directors might ask how long Clayton had been a driver, and how he had been bred. This man, Clayton, about three months ago, in consequence of his inexperience, caused the death of Thomas

Chamberlain, a porter, and it is strange that his qualifications were not then inquired into; but, being a favourite of Mr. Watson, his conduct is kept in the shade, and he still drives the trains! With reference to Clayton's qualifications, Mr. Watson knows that if he were to expose them he would, as a matter of course, implicate himself.

I shall now call your attention to the fatal affair which took place on the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway on Saturday evening week. There have been a variety of accounts in the newspapers, all of which appear to cast the whole blame upon the engineman, Joseph Ward. The facts of the case, however, are so plain, that it will require little trouble to make your readers understand it, and enable them to arrive at the proper conclusion—which is, that the whole blame of this melancholy occurrence must rest upon Mr. Dore, the station-master at Defford. On the 8.5 P.M. mail-train leaving Gloucester, a red signal-lamp was put on behind, which indicates that there is a special-train immediately to follow. Now, it appears from all the evidence that no notice was taken of this signal, either by Mr. Dore, the station-master, or John Murphy, the porter, for if they did see it, it was certainly most disgraceful to run the empty waggon on to the line, because, having intimation that a special-train was coming up, they could not calculate upon one second; besides, to have allowed it to remain where it was, would have detained the Birmingham train only two minutes, and those minutes would have saved all the disaster. On this reckless conduct then rests all the mischief, and to whatever length they may carry the evidence, no other just conclusion can be arrived at. It is shameful of Mr. Dore to throw all the blame on the engineman, who is dead and cannot answer for himself. I have no doubt that when the fireman is able to give evidence, it will be found, if his mouth be not gagged, that Joseph Ward was not informed that that part of the line was to be put under repair immediately after the mail-train had passed, and that he was not told to proceed past Defford station to Spetchley slowly. Mr. Brown, the contractor, sent down positive instructions to Gloucester to that effect, and had Mr. Crawford, the foreman, paid attention to these instructions, and given the same to Ward, the collision could not have taken place, as Ward, for his own sake, would have passed the station with all due caution.

The evidence already given is of the most contradictory character I ever read, notwithstanding the flourish that the Coroner was attended by a long string of officials, Solicitor, Secretary, Messrs. Swain, Payne, and Mc'Connell, and the statement by the Solicitor, that it is the desire of those gentlemen that the fullest inquiry should be made. Sir, I maintain that the presence of these great functionaries prevents the truth from coming out, because, under the circumstances, the inferior servants of the Company are afraid to state all they know. I found that this was so on a former occasion at Derby. The Solicitor is there on behalf of the Company, and he puts questions by the advice of his colleagues, and I contend that if there were another legal gentleman there on the part of the public, to cross-examine the witnesses, the face of affairs would be altered very materially. For instance, Mr. Dore contradicts himself. At one time he states that he was on the station

with a red light in his hand ; at another time he states he was in the office booking passengers, and ran out when he heard the train coming up to the station. Mr. M'Connell, too, gave evidence as ridiculous as possibly could be. He said that one man was quite able to push a waggon from one line to another with one hand, and carry a red light in the other, and at the same time look out for danger ! He made an equally foolish reply to one of the jury, who asked, whether, since the increase of traffic, there were not too few hands at Defford ? " Oh," says Mr. M'Connell, " we always send hands from Bromsgrove when they are wanted !" Now, Sir, I should like to know how Mr. M'Connell is to be informed when they are required. If a sudden addition of business comes, does Mr. M'Connell mean that it is to be stopped until a messenger is sent to Bromsgrove ? If not, then the parties at Defford must proceed to business at all hazards. This is railway superintendence with a vengeance ! The guard of the train was also self-contradictory. At one time he says he saw the red light, but was too far off the driver to inform him. At another time, he says he could not see the light exactly, from the quantity of steam from the engine ; but the engine-man might have seen it if he had been looking out. How ridiculous is this remark ! If the engineman was enveloped in steam, as he must have been, how was he to see any signal whatever at night ? Upon looking into all the evidence, so far as it has gone, it appears to me to be, on the part of the officials, a piece of trickery.

I cannot proceed further without referring to Dore's scandalous treatment of the widow of Joseph Ward, on the Monday when she went to see the mutilated remains of her unfortunate husband. On arriving at Defford she asked where her husband's body was. Dore took her to the place, opened the door, and said, " there he is the villain ; if he had lived he would have been hung." The body was only roughly covered with two or three coke bags. The poor woman fainted ; and when she had slightly recovered, she asked Dore for a little cold water : he said he had none. Before leaving the place, she implored this hard-hearted man for a sheet to cover the body ; Dore said he could not get one, but the covering was good enough for him. Mr. Guest, one of the contractors, was anxious that a shell should be made for the body with all possible despatch, and gave orders accordingly ; but when it was nearly completed, Mr. Dore countermanded it, and said it must come from Bromsgrove, which kept the body in that degraded state for two days more ! Can the Directors know of this ? I hope not.

The fireman was carried from the broken down train in a senseless state to the house of Dore, as being nearest at hand. He was bleeding profusely from the head. Upon being laid down on the floor the poor man recovered a little, and asked Dore if he would give him a handkerchief to tie up his wound. Dore gave a similar answer to that which he had given to the poor widow, " I have no handkerchief ; you deserve hanging." The poor man then asked if he would favour him with a glass of ginger beer, for he felt so very weak (Dore sells ginger beer at his house). Again the answer was similar to that he gave to the widow, " You shall have no ginger beer here !" A philanthropic gentleman, a passenger, who had followed the poor man to see what was



the extent of his injury, and had witnessed this treatment, ran immediately back to the train, brought his carpet-bag, and gently put it under the head of the bleeding man, and was about to bind his head with his handkerchief, when the surgeon arrived, who put a stop to the hæmorrhage.

In addition to all that has occurred at this station, last night (Thursday) a fatal catastrophe nearly took place from the imprudent conduct of this same station-master Dore. When the luggage-train came up, he had a waggon load of cotton or wool packs to go by the train, and requested that it should be attached. This was objected to by the train men, because the packs were not covered with canvass to protect them from the sparks of the engine. Remonstrance was of no avail with this headstrong station-master, and the waggon was accordingly attached. The luggage-train started, and had reached only about six miles, when one of the bales dropped off (as it was expected it would, for there were no ropes to fasten it), and lay across the line. The express-train immediately followed, and came in contact with the bale, which made the engine leap from the rails, the engine detaching itself from the tender, and the tender from the train. The consequence was, that two of the leading springs of the engine were broken; but most fortunately after the leap it came down again upon the rails. If it had been otherwise, from the great velocity of the express-train the result would undoubtedly have been dreadful.

I do not of course venture to predict how the inquest will terminate, nor do I know if Thursday's occurrence will be allowed to be hinted at, but I shall make a point to be at the inquest on Monday morning, and I shall take care that an ungarbled statement shall go forth to the railway world through your columns.

Sir, I must inform you that such an occurrence as resulted in the death of Joseph Ward is nothing new on this line. A very short time ago a truck was left at the same station, and on the same line, and the mail train pitched into it. The engineman leaped off, and fortunately not being killed, the blame could not be put upon him. The consequence was, that the then station-master was discharged, and Mr. Dore was put in his place. A mere discharge, however, is too trifling a punishment in a case of this kind; and certainly, it is impossible that Dore can be a proper person for a station-master, when he has shown he is possessed of no humanity.

In my last letter I promised to discuss a dangerous experiment of Mr. Bruyeres on the Birmingham line, and other matters in which the public are deeply concerned, and I meant to show you, also, how favourite fitters can be sent up to London on private business, in the character of stokers; but, for the present, I forbear. It would appear that Locomotive Superintendents continue to resort to measures that much endanger the public, and Boards of Directors look on unconcerned. It shall, with your permission, be my business that such things shall, at least, not go unexposed, and with this view, I may trouble you again next week.

## LETTER XXXIX.

Birmingham, September 22, 1845.

IN my letter which appeared in your paper of the 17th instant, I took a brief review of the contradictory evidence which, previous to that time, had been given before the Coroner's jury at Defford, and stated, that so far as that evidence had gone, it appeared to be, on the part of the officials of the Company, a piece of trickery. Since the inquiry has been closed, the opinion I previously formed remains unaltered, and upon what I grounded that opinion, I shall endeavour to explain to you in as concise a manner as I can, by taking a review of the leading parts of the evidence bearing upon the particular point respecting which the jury wished to arrive at a just conclusion.

Although the inquest was prolonged throughout three days, not one-eighth part of the investigation had reference to the actual cause of the accident. For example, Mr. Sanders, the Secretary, was, at the request of the Solicitor, examined, though it was absolutely impossible that he could speak in the slightest degree to the purpose. To go over the whole of his evidence would be a complete waste of my time and your space; but there are one or two passages which I cannot overlook. In the first part of his examination on Wednesday, he said he wished to correct a mis-statement with regard to the reduction of the number of officers on the line, which appeared in the report of the inquest on Tuesday. He said, "I deny that portion of a statement which refers to the reduction of policemen, porters, or any part of the staff required for the working of the traffic with safety to the public." Now, Sir, this denial is an evasion of the question. He founds it upon the circumstance that no reduction has taken place in these particulars, since the Birmingham and Gloucester came under the management of the Midland Railway Company. Now, no one asserted that there had been. You are aware that that management commenced only on the 1st of July last, but previous to that date there were considerable reductions in all the working staff on the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway; and, Sir, you may remember the very many instances in which I called attention to these unaccountable reductions, and I appealed to General Pasley to make a special inspection of the whole line, otherwise he would soon have to do so when a fatal accident had taken place. This prediction of mine, like many others of a similar description, has unfortunately been realised, and most assuredly, from the sole want of a sufficient number of proper and efficient men. This fact appears prominently in the evidence. With reference to the signal-lamps, Mr. Sanders says that the present mode was found to be very defective, and that the Board of Trade had recommended that the old system should be resumed, and that the Directors had anticipated the suggestion. Even by his own statement the suggestion had only been so "anticipated" after the accident, for no order for the improved signals was given until within a few days of last Wednesday. Mr. M'Connell supported this, and went a little further, to which I shall presently refer. Mr. Sanders even stated that the Board

of Trade had given instructions that no truck should be removed from the sidings until the trains had passed, and that he had since given instructions to every station-clerk, which would fully meet the wishes of the Board of Trade; and, he added, "I do not know whether it occurred to the Directors, before the accident happened, that the placing of a truck on the main line was dangerous!" Was there ever such a silly and ridiculous statement by the most ignorant of persons before a Coroner's jury? I wonder if it would occur to this very enlightened Secretary or his Directors (for surely Mr. Hudson cannot be included), that if he were to place himself before a loaded twelve-pounder a few seconds before it was fired, he or they would be in a dangerous position? Destruction is just as certain to be the result in the one case as in the other. I need not go further with this official. I have long since proved that he would not be a proper book-keeper to a mercantile establishment, far less a Secretary to a railway of 100 miles in length. This line must undergo very great improvements, and during the carrying of them out I have no doubt I shall have much cause to refer to this gentleman.

The evidence of James Baird, the stoker, I shall next notice. This young man was exceedingly hard beset by the foreman of the jury, one Lieutenant Rose, of the Navy, who is little known in the village of Defford (having been a resident for only a few weeks), farther than that he has thrown out hints that he should always be addressed as Captain. Baird stated, that before they reached Eckington station the pumps of the engine became deranged, and that Ward desired him to let the fire go down, for if the pumps did not work in a short time, he should be obliged to put his fire out (he had then put off his steam), but after passing Eckington they began to work again, when the train would be about a mile and a quarter from Defford. Ward then desired him, he said, to make up the fire again, which kept him so employed until they reached Defford, when Ward immediately called out to him that there was something wrong. He was closely questioned by several of the jury, if he did not perceive any red light on approaching the station of Defford. He distinctly said he did not, for his head was down all the way betwixt the two stations, being busy with his work. From the ignorance of these jurymen of the heavy duty that devolves upon a stoker, and more particularly with a luggage-train, they imagined that Baird was evading the question; however, the man kept to his point. He was next asked if, when Ward called out that there was something wrong, he had his engine reversed. He said he could not answer that question, for immediately after Ward spoke he was pitched from the engine on to the road. A jurymen put a very ridiculous question, "Can you tell whether Ward was on the engine with you or not?" Lieutenant Rose, the foreman, then asked at how many miles speed they were running betwixt Eckington and Defford? Baird said he could not tell; it was impossible for him to do so; he was otherwise employed than to pay attention to the speed. The foreman here got out of temper, and addressing Baird, said, "You are insulting the jury, and I beg to inform you the Coroner will commit you if you do not answer the questions put to you." Baird replied he could not help it; he had

spoken the truth ; if he had been directed to keep notice of the speed they were running at, and had not been obliged to work with his head down, he could have done it, but as it was he could not. The foreman then said, " You must tell us the speed, or we shall make you do it—you must say whether you were running at ten, fifteen, twenty, or thirty miles an hour ? " " Then (said Baird) I may perhaps tell you a lie, I cannot speak positively." Foreman—" We must have a direct answer." Baird—" Well, then, say thirty miles an hour, but I do not say I am correct." Now this expression of thirty miles an hour was just what was wanted to get the blame attached to poor Ward. Before proceeding further with this evidence, I beg to put a simple question to this clever foreman. Suppose you were on board a sloop-of-war at sea, and were becalmed, and you were to go down to the cabin, and during that time a breeze sprang up, and something occurred on deck, which it was necessary should be inquired into on a future day—suppose you were brought forward as assistant Lieutenant to give evidence, what would you think if you were asked what had occurred on deck when you were below, and, above all, were asked at how many knots the vessel was running during the time you were in the cabin ? What would you say ? Why, I suppose your answer would be similar to that of the stoker Baird, namely, that you were below, and could not tell what occurred on deck, and as to the rate of speed, that it was impossible for you to answer, unless you had been on deck and seen the log.

Now, Mr. Editor, I shall prove to you how shameful it was for Mr. Secretary Sanders and Mr. Superintendent M'Connell to take advantage of the statement of thirty miles an hour, for the purpose of attributing recklessness to Ward in passing the station. I would ask the oldest and most experienced engine-driver in the kingdom if it was not absolutely impossible for Ward to have attained that speed in running a mile. From what occurred before reaching Eckington, the water must have been very low in the boiler ; the fire was down when the pumps began to work ; cold water was put in ; the fire damped considerably by the supply of fresh coke, which, as a matter of course, would bring down the steam ; and under these circumstances, the reasonable and practical calculation is, that he was not running above ten miles an hour, with twenty loaded waggons behind him. I do not blame the young man, Baird, for the mis-statement, for he said before and after the foreman threatened him with a committal, that he might " tell a lie."

It will be necessary to make a remark or two on Mr. M'Connell's evidence, as it principally referred to the importance of proper signals, and the inefficiency of those used on the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway. Mr. M'Connell, in corroborating what Mr. Sanders had stated, added that the accident had called the attention of the Directors to the matter ; and that when General Pasley made objections to the present mode of their night signals, he was told that they formerly used the lamps on poles, but that, in consequence of those poles being too low, the signals were not seen on approaching the stations, and that they, in consequence, resorted to the use of the hand-lamp. A juror inquired what was the cause of that ? Mr. M'Connell explained, that it unfortunately happened that at all their stations there was a bridge close by,

and that these bridges were very low, while those on the London and Birmingham line were much higher, so that the signals could be seen under them; but it had been arranged by General Pasley and the Company, that poles were to be erected from thirty to forty feet high, with improved lamps upon them, and the signals would thus be seen over the top of the bridges.

Sir, does not this statement further prove the gross and most negligent management that has for a length of time existed on this unfortunate railway? I need not remark upon the inefficiency of the lamp at present in use. When Dore places his hand-lamp down on the edge of the platform it is about forty-five or fifty yards from the bridge, and almost in a line with the abutment of the bridge. Now, on approaching the station the bridge causes a considerable shade, and the light being on the ground, and the engineman being enveloped in steam, as I remarked in my last letter, it would be absolutely impossible to distinguish the light properly. Again, it was stated that this same light could have been seen as far as Eckington, because the line was straight; but I maintain that this also is impossible. Common sense is sufficient to convince any man that at a mile and a half distance he could not see a lamp light, the size of the glass being only  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches by 3 inches. In my opinion, it would scarcely be a speck, and in a foggy atmosphere it could not be discerned half a dozen yards off, and yet this arrangement would never have been heard of, if such sacrifice of life had not taken place!

As to the continuation of Dore's evidence, it is all against the Company's arrangements and himself. He said he did not see the signal-lamp on the mail-train to caution him that a special-train was approaching, although it was distinctly proved by Mr. Crawford, of Gloucester, that he saw it put on, and even that it was seen by the station-master at Cheltenham, when the train passed that station. This shows clearly that neither Murphy nor Dore had been paying proper attention to his duty, when the mail-train passed Defford station. Dore also stated that he had too little assistance. This was admitted both by Mr. Sanders and Mr. M'Connell, but they qualified it by saying, that they sent assistance when goods were coming to the Birmingham market. Mr. M'Connell completely contradicted Dore, when the latter endeavoured to screen himself by saying that Ward was in the frequent practice of disregarding his signal, and that he had reported the same to Mr. M'Connell. Mr. M'Connell assured the jury that he had never received any such report, and unfortunately poor Ward could not come forward to vindicate himself from Dore's foul assertion. I shall in a future letter refer to Dore's general conduct as station-master. This will be necessary, that the public in that quarter may be better attended to. I am in possession of much evidence in reference to him. I shall also point out the great impropriety of not paying station-masters a proper salary, so as to render it unnecessary for them to impose on the public, in order to make a decent living. Dore's incivility will lead me to refer to Mr. Payne, the manager of the goods' traffic, from whose proceedings the Company derive very little credit.

If I had not trespassed so much on your valuable space, I should have

taken a review of the unwarrantable conduct of Mr. Whately, the Solicitor, during the whole of the proceedings, and his unaccountable speech to bias the jury at the close.

I should like to ask General Pasley why, when the catastrophe at Camphill took place, and he visited the spot three days after, he did not make it his business to examine the ineffective state of the signals, and the unconscionable labour that is put upon the switchmen. General Pasley surely knew, or ought to have known, that the switchman who caused the accident at Camphill, had all the numerous points and signals to attend to, and also to do duty in the office.

The Birkenhead management; the change of management on the Hull and Selby under Mr. Cabrey, since Mr. Gray left, and the probable dangerous results; the South-Eastern and Mr. Cudworth; and the other matters I referred to at the close of my last, shall be the subject of my next communication.

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#### LETTER XL.

Birmingham, October 14, 1845.

It must surprise your readers in general to be informed that, although so very many fatal catastrophes have taken place within so short a period as three months, and on various lines, many Superintendents in power will not take a lesson from the past, and endeavour by every means at their command to resort to measures (so far as experience suggests) that will, for the future, prevent such lamentable results. The fact of their being so obstinate in neglecting to lend heed to the sound advice I have so often given them, through your aid (and for which I feel assured the travelling public owe you a debt of gratitude), is unaccountable. Nevertheless, I must allow that many of my suggestions have been adopted by Mr. Kirtley, of the Midland Railway; and believe me, Sir, it will always afford me much pleasure to be able to continue to speak favourably of him. He has long since found, to his sad experience (I would desire others to mark this), that although he was very wroth against me at the time I wrote so bitterly against him, I was in the right, and he in the wrong. While I am mentioning the Midland, may I call Mr. Kirtley's attention, and more especially that of the Directors, to the dangerous state in which the permanent way again is at this season of the year, while it should have been in the best possible order. It is most surprising to me how the trains keep on the rails, the oscillation is so great on many portions of it. I would recommend the Directors to compare the original Midland Counties' permanent way with that of the Birmingham and Derby. I assure you it would afford me delight if I could congratulate many others upon their amendment; but you will observe, before the close of this letter, that I have little prospect of doing so just yet. It is my belief, that if very energetic exertions are not resorted to immediately, it will be my lot to put upon record some more direful calamities during the approaching foggy weather, than any I have hitherto had the unpleasant duty of noticing.

Times without number have I denounced the gross impropriety of reducing the staff of useful men at stations for a paltry saving; and I must state another case which nearly caused much destruction, and, as usual, to cover the impropriety of conduct of officials, the innocent man is made the sufferer. At the Chester station of the Birkenhead line, previous to the appointment of Mr. Watson, there were two night watchmen; latterly there was only one, and the duty of this one man was to look over the whole station, get the steam up in the engine to be ready to take out the early morning-mail, and after this he was obliged to leave the station and let it take care of itself, for the purpose of going to their residences in various parts of the town to call up the mail-train men. A few Sundays back, John Davis, the night watchman, got the steam up in the *Zillah* engine as usual, and then left the station for the purposes described above. On his return, you may guess his amazement when no *Zillah* was to be seen! All was dark and dreary; his only companion was his hand-lamp, and he had no other resource but to proceed to the town again to call up the pilot-men, and get an engine ready to go in search of the lost one. The regulator having inadvertently been left open, when the steam got up the engine had started off on the line from Birkenhead; but most fortunately there happened to be very little fire, which allowed the steam to get down before the engine had reached six miles, and then it stood. If there had been more fire, it would have assuredly on that line gone right through the Birkenhead station into the river; and, again, if the engine had been left in the back gear, it would be impossible to calculate the destruction that must have taken place at the Chester station. Thousands of pounds would have been lost, for the saving of a labourer's wages! However, Mr. Watson, to cover his imprudence, discharged Davis, because he was unable to do two men's work, and has now appointed two in his place. Thus we seek to learn wisdom at much risk and expense! Further, to convince you that I write advisedly, I beg to remind you of what I mentioned in my letter of the 1st ultimo respecting the new engine *Birkenhead*, and the unjustifiable steps Mr. Watson endeavoured to take against the respectable makers, to throw the blame upon them, but in which he was foiled. To convince you that he knew he was in the wrong, I may allude to the following circumstances which took place lately:—A boiler-maker, of the name of Glover, and two or three others, went to some amusement in the neighbourhood, and left their work for two or three days. On their return, for their bad conduct Mr. Watson suspended them for a week. The propriety or impropriety of this is not what I have to do with, but at the expiration of the suspension Glover went to the engine-shed, and said he thought he was hardly dealt by, and remarked that he would not return to work again as the others had done, but would expose the *Birkenhead's* fire-box, for he knew all about it, and that he would expose Mr. Watson's conduct regarding the destruction of that engine. He then left the shed. The foreman immediately informed Mr. Watson of the circumstance, when Mr. Watson sent for Glover and requested him to return to his work, and he would increase his wages 1s. per day. I leave your readers to draw their own conclusions.

In a former letter I promised to you an instance or two of Mr.

Bruyeres' continual mismanagement as Superintendent-in-Chief of the London and Birmingham. If he has a patron to serve (and he knows well he cannot do without them), he finds situations for those who are presented to him by them. It matters not about their qualifications or experience. I will give a few instances in point. On the 26th ult., when the 4 A.M. goods'-train from London reached near Harrow, the coupling chains broke, leaving four waggons with the guard behind. Now, this guard had no experience of the importance of the duty he was entrusted with, and besides, Mr. Bruyeres had not provided him with any printed instructions. There is a positive order on this line, that if such an occurrence as the above take place, the guard shall go not less than 600 yards back with his signal. This new guard went only about 150 yards back. The second goods'-train leaves London exactly thirty minutes after the first, and, of course, was close at hand. The consequence was, that up came the second train; and as the morning was foggy, and there is a curve at this place, the engineer did not see the guard and his signal until they were close upon him. They had no time to stop such a train, and therefore the engineers leaped to save their lives. The crash was dreadful; the waggons doubled up one upon the top of the other, and those goods were eight hours later in getting to Rugby.

If life had been lost, on whom would Mr. Bruyeres have endeavoured to throw the blame? He, no doubt, would have kept his own blunder in the shade, and he must have been sorry to stand against his patron's presentation, when he himself was the only cause. Mr. Bruyeres is, moreover, one of your economising gentlemen, to the danger of the passengers. For example; the third-class train has always from fifteen to twenty carriages fully loaded, and Mr. Bruyeres places one guard, and, of course, only one break, to take charge of this long train, containing above 300 persons on the average! If it were a "gentleman's" train, with four carriages only, there would be two guards to take care of them. Mr. Bruyeres is one of those who despise a lesson. A week or two ago, when the third-class train approached Coventry, the single guard put on his break at the usual place, and it broke; the consequence was, that the train was propelled, from its own velocity, considerably beyond the station, and if the line had been obstructed the consequences must have been awful. The driver, as usual, would have been the first seized upon, and if his life had been saved, he would, perhaps, have been severely punished, though all the time innocent, and then a very gentle recommendation would have issued from the jury and the Board of Trade that in future there must be two guards and two breaks. In connection with Mr. Bruyeres, I cannot but refer to his most injudicious arrangement with the watchmen at the junction of the Midland Railway. This is a place of immense traffic, and there are two watchmen continually. One of the day men receives 20s. per week, the other the paltry sum of 16s. They have both the same duty. The consequence is, that within the last six or eight months there have been five different 16s. strangers put on, some of them never having the handle of a switch in their fists before. At a point like this there should be no disparity betwixt the two men; they are dependent on each other in the performance of their



respective duties ; and experience has sufficiently shown that a fit and proper person will not remain at the same point for 16s. when another gets 20s. I would seriously call the Directors' attention to this fact before it be too late. I would beg leave to refer them to what took place there on the 30th July last. If it had occurred in the winter season there unquestionably would have been a jury required, all through the imprudence of Mr. Bruyeres, who is necessarily, but injudiciously, entrusted with those matters.

Before I leave this line I wish to ask Mr. Parker why, the other week, he thought proper to act in direct opposition to an express order from the Board of Trade, and also from his own Board, that he is not to give a pilot-man a verbal order to contradict a previous one ? The engineman declared he delivered the order of Mr. Parker just as he received it. The circumstance was this :—The rail-blocks were not properly ballasted from the circumstance of the extension of the sidings not being finished, which caused the luggage-engine to get off the line. An order was sent back that the down-line was blocked up. Mr. Parker was present, and matters were soon put right, when he despatched the pilot (he says) to order the train to proceed on the down-line, as it was clear. Instead of this, the pilot gave the order for the train to come down on the up-line to the next crossing, and thus the matter rests. Both maintain they are correct ; but, of course, "a Superintendent" was never known to be in the wrong ! The express passenger-train from Birmingham at this time became due, and all of a sudden both trains came in sight, at full speed, from opposite directions, on the same line, the one running at forty-five, and the other at thirty-five miles an hour ; and if it had not been for the foresight and prudence of the station-master, the collision would have been dreadful. I shall give another instance of the improper assumption of power by Superintendents. At Rugby, on Thursday last, about 8 o'clock P. M., there were two engines with goods waiting to come out of the siding which extends on the outside of the up-signal. The policeman on duty was engaged about fifty feet from the signal-post, for the purpose of getting an engine from one line to the other, to assist the goods' engine to make a start out of the siding. The red signal was on for the luggage-men not to stir until it was turned. Mr. Green, stepping out of his duty, thought there was plenty of time for the luggage to cross the line, although the express-train was about due, and he ordered a porter to turn off the signal, and desired the engineman to come on. Upon the policeman turning round, and seeing his signal changed, he ran to it with all speed, and put it on again, and was just making inquiry as to who turned it when the express-train passed. Here is superintendence and unwarrantable interference ! Of course, the policeman reported Mr. Green's conduct to the Inspector next morning. When Mr. Green understood this, he begged the Inspector to make no further report in the matter. Thus, Sir, things are managed betwixt officials, and the matter is hushed up ; but if any engineman had ordered his fireman to turn a policeman's signal, Mr. Green would have been the first to have him conveyed before a magistrate, and then he would have been certain of three months' hard labour ; but as Mr. Green is a "Superintendent," and under the protection of Mr. Bury,

it was of no consequence. If life had been sacrificed the porter would have been made the sufferer, and Mr. Green would have escaped. I would entreat, once more, that Mr. Bury should make a little more strict inquiry into the iniquitous management of Mr. Green, in making the enginemen run thirty to forty hours on a stretch, without rest, and then robbing them of their due time. If this matter is not looked into more particularly, I shall show how the public are endangered, and this will strip Mr. Bury of some of his laurels, and, at the same time, do the Directors very little credit.

I would particularly beg Mr. Green that, when he makes out a report against any man, he should, as a matter of honesty, abide by the truth, for by these reports a man's bread is at stake. I have shown above, that Mr. Green is not infallible himself, and that he subjects himself to be reported upon, but fortunately for him he has the means at command to get out of it; for example, I shall instance a cruel case (it is a pity that truth is not more inquired after by principals). A fortnight ago a driver of the name of Watkins came with a new engine from Wolverton to Rugby with a train of goods; after shunting the waggons on to the siding he went to get water, and having done so, he found the water in the boiler rather low, when he signalled the policeman if he might run his engine on to the line to pump water; the policeman held up his red signal not to stir. At the moment the express-train was coming up, and the engineman noticing it, lessened his speed so that he might be able to bring up. On coming up, nothing being the matter, he kept on, but the lessening of this speed caused inquiry, and Mr. Green sent in a report against Watkins, who was not allowed to say a word, and in consequence he received "notice." In vain did Watkins wish the policeman to be examined on the point; there was no hearing, so on Saturday the man is out of bread. "Jedburgh justice" is not an uncommon thing on railways.

I shall now refer to the imprudent course Mr. Cudworth is about to adopt on the Dover line. I cannot make myself believe that the Directors of that line are properly acquainted with the danger which this change will cause. Mr. Cudworth has given notice that he is to make a complete swoop of the Ashford station, and cause the men to run right through from London to Dover in one day, which will make a distance of 182 miles each day, for five days out of six; and when they work on Sundays, which will be in two out of every three, the week's work will amount to 1,092 miles. Now, I would appeal to any medical gentleman if the constitution of men is able to stand such work, exposed to all weathers. Under Mr. Cubitt's arrangements the men worked 140 miles a-day, and made no complaints—a distance I consider quite sufficient, and more than sufficient for such exposed work. I have no doubt Mr. Cudworth will say that he pays the men better than did Mr. Cubitt. Nominally he does so. When they applied for an increase of wages, he agreed that 6s. 8d. was too little for the work performed, and agreed that 7s. 6d. should be the rate; but to overbalance this supposed generosity, he "docked" them of half a day for every Sunday they worked, and put an additional labour upon each day of sixty-two miles running. Now, for this extraordinary additional labour, they are only benefitted

2s. per week; and for this 2s., from such extraordinary labour, in one winter season their constitutions will become so broken down that they will be entirely useless for such work for the future. Would you believe it, Sir, Mr. Cudworth says 1,092 miles per week are not too much work for any man! It is a pity but he could be subjected to make trial himself in the approaching winter. Long before the term ceased, he would wish to be back to his 500*l.* or 600*l.* a-year, with his hands in his pockets. The fact is, the men are not able to do it, and the Directors will find, to their sad experience, that this trial of the strength of the human constitution will turn out to be a very expensive experiment. I wish they would reconsider the matter in time. I am sure the Legislature would never sanction such inordinate labour. Mr. M'Connell, at the Coroner's inquest at Defford, declared upon oath his belief that the engineman was paid too little in having only from 6*s.* to 7*s.* per day. He wished, he said, to see so important a body of men better educated and better paid. I was glad to hear Mr. M'Connell make such a declaration, cancelling his former opinions; this is the commencement of amendment, and believe me, Sir, nothing will gratify me more than to be able to congratulate him on his improved opinion. It would appear that Mr. Cudworth has to go through some severe ordeals of his own making before he arrives at the present opinions of Mr. M'Connell. What would it avail to the Dover men if they were to receive 10*s.* per day, if in a few weeks they were certain to be laid upon a bed of sickness, perhaps never to rise therefrom again? The poor firemen will be considerable sufferers and losers. They will have half a day's less pay in the week, and for this loss will be obliged to put into the fire 1,176*lbs.* more coke, not taking into account the arduous duty of extra "fire-picking," &c. I can assure Mr. Cudworth, that if he does not relinquish his present notion, he will soon find himself in inextricable difficulty from the high wages held out to the men to go to France and the West Indies. From sickness and other casualties he will soon be unable to work the line effectively.

In a former letter I intimated my opinion that Mr. Fairnigh was working the locomotive department of the Eastern Counties' Railway very creditably, and that when the Cambridge and Ely arrangements were completed, he would be able to carry the work on even still more effectively. At that time I had no idea that in so short a period he would fall so much in my estimation, and not only in mine, but in the estimation of all who know any thing of the business of which he is at the head on these lines. He has resorted to the practice of putting on men for enginemen who never had the charge of an engine at all, causing the passengers to complain of continual delays, which have frequently been remarked on in the daily papers. Mr. F. is following in the footsteps of the iniquities of the North Midland. I would press upon the Direction of this line to take a lesson from the Board at Derby, and from Mr. M'Connell's present opinion, noticed above. No one knows better than Mr. M'Connell that Mr. Fairnigh must retrace his steps. I would recommend him to do it of his own accord, for he may rest assured he will not succeed. He has put on a person named James Hopkinson, who never was even a fireman; Gundy, a fireman about

four months only; and William Haden, only firing about three months. Need it be wondered at that the trains are delayed. He perhaps may say he could not get better men, but this would be untrue, for there are firemen on the line who have been in that situation from four to six years, and who have had much experience, and know the line well. I hope I shall not have occasion to write in this strain again with reference to Mr. F., but be able to return to my former good opinion.

Much mischief having been done from want of sufficient and proper signals on railways, I would call Mr. Norris's attention to Walsall station, it having now been made into a luggage-station also. From the great additional traffic, I think it would be very advisable if an additional signal-post were placed half-way between James's Bridge and Walsall. In foggy weather there is hardly time for the engineman to see the signal. At all events, I consider it absolutely necessary during the winter months, for the line is often necessarily obstructed with waggons.

Mr. Norris may remember that a short time ago an accident took place, because when the policeman was attending his flag he could not see to the points, so that the firemen of the luggage-train shifted the points for themselves, and left them wrong, and when the passenger-train followed, it ran over the points, fortunately without doing any injury, but it might have been very serious. The man has to attend to the signal and points at the same time, and with additional traffic and dark weather, it is impossible he can do it with safety. While I am thus calling upon Mr. Norris (which I do with all respect, for I have a high esteem for his general management), I would state that it has long been a surprise to me that the signal-lamps at Crewe station have never yet been lighted up with gas, when the Company have a gas establishment. Every one must know that too good a light cannot be put in a signal-lamp. Should Mr. Norris think of making the alteration, I would recommend an increased size of lamp. At present, as Mr. Norris must allow, they are by far too small.\*

It was my intention in the conclusion of this letter to call General Pasley's attention to the foregoing facts, but perhaps it would be wasting your time. His reports are private, and, besides, they go for nothing; for all that the Board of Trade has ever yet done has been only to issue a recommendation from their Lordships to do such and such a thing. A promise perhaps was given at the time that it would be obeyed, and if ever such recommendation was attended to it was only for a day.

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## LETTER XLI.

Birmingham, December 13, 1845.

I do not pretend to the gift of prophecy, but your readers may have remarked that I have over and over again predicted that fatal

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\* These signals were after this immediately improved.

results would ensue on various railways, consequent upon flagrant mismanagement. Those predictions have unfortunately been realised. Any other individual would be able to foretell the same, were he to apply himself as assiduously to the general railway locomotive system of this country.

In my last letter, which appeared in your journal of the 22nd of October, there is the following sentence:—"It is my belief that, if very energetic exertions are not resorted to immediately, it will be my lot to put upon record some more direful calamities during the approaching foggy weather than any I have had the unpleasant duty of noticing." From all that has occurred, it is just as requisite that I make the same appeal again. Scarcely had the above been written, when it was awfully verified in the loss of the life of Mr. Boteler, the Commissioner, and Mr. Stubbs, serjeant of police. This melancholy catastrophe was caused by the same ill-judged management which I so severely denounced in my last letter, while referring to the Eastern Counties' and Mr. Fairnibough, to which I would earnestly beg leave to refer your readers, and more particularly such of them as are Railway Superintendents, of whatsoever standing.

Believe me, Sir, it is a growing evil, which I fear in a short time most Superintendents in England will be obliged, more or less, to resort to, however dangerous the consequences to the travelling public and destructive to railway property generally. For this evil, Locomotive Superintendents of the first eminence are to blame. Some time ago I foretold the dilemma into which Superintendents would inevitably fall, if they did not listen to my advice. The growing evil of which I complain will be fully illustrated in the course of this letter.

To return to the lamentable accident on the Midland Railway, for the purpose of tracing the true and only cause of that catastrophe. As usual, there have been two lengthened inquests upon the two unfortunate gentlemen, and every prospect of a third, the whole of the proceedings of which were conducted under the special guidance of an eminent solicitor, attended by several members of the Board of Directors, making a flourish to the community that their presence indicated that they were anxious to have the fullest investigation gone into, while all the time it was the very reverse; for it was not hinted in the whole proceedings who inquired into the appointment of Wheatley, the driver. I have previously clearly proved similar facts. You will remember I did so after the inquests on the Brandling Junction, Derby, Nottingham, Camden Town, Eastern Counties', and Defford. I shall now substantiate the same fact at the late inquests above referred to, in a very few words. There is no mystery or difficulty in the matter.

In the first instance, the actual (but not the culpable) cause must be attributed to the total incapacity and want of experience of Thomas Wheatley, the engineman. I consider it unjust that the verdict of manslaughter should have been brought against him, for what he did was no more than might have been expected. To whom, then, is the blame to be attached? In the first place, to Mr. Kirtley, the Locomotive Superintendent-in-Chief of the Midland Railway, for deputing the power of putting on enginemen to Mr. Scott, his petty Superintendent at

Leeds (now removed by Mr. Hudson to be chief Locomotive Superintendent on the Eastern Counties', of whom I shall have something to say when I notice that line); and, in the second place, the moral culpability must rest upon Mr. Scott. It would be wasting space were I to go over all the circumstances of the case. *That* has already been done by a number of witnesses, whose evidence has appeared in all the newspapers. Nor need I make any comment on the evidence to attain my object, which is not to traduce any one in his public capacity. My aim is to show, that if Directors and Superintendents had listened to reason, and the very many hints given from time to time, most of the fatal accidents that have occurred in England during the last three years, and that also on the Edinburgh and Glasgow in last May, would have been prevented. The said Thomas Wheatley, who "pitched into" the passenger-train, is a young man bred a fitter, never having been used to run a locomotive engine, for he never was a fireman, nor acquainted with the line, or with the use of the signals; and, above all, he had not sufficient knowledge in what distance he could bring up a train when in full lead. These being facts, how can Mr. Scott be justified in putting on so inexperienced a man? Ought not Mr. Scott to have been brought to the bar of justice? And he would have been so, if we had a public prosecutor in England, as they have in Scotland. He was not ignorant of what I have stated; but the young man was an apprentice of Mr. Cabrey, and, as a matter of course, he had an ambition to be an engine-driver, and obtained the patronage of his old master; and Mr. Scott would not dare to act contrary to Mr. Cabrey, for it is undeniable that Mr. Cabrey is the head Locomotive Superintendent of all the lines of which Mr. Hudson is the great governor, all the other Superintendents being merely subordinates. Notwithstanding all this, Mr. Scott cannot, nor never will, be justified, nor can any other Superintendent whatever, in placing the lives of the public in jeopardy by the appointment of such men as Wheatley. In support of this, I would seriously call upon Mr. Scott to carefully peruse the Lord Advocate of Scotland's address to Paton and M'Nab, previous to passing sentence upon those individuals, and which has appeared in your paper. There is much in that address applicable to Mr. Scott, and not only to him but it should be put into the hands of every Superintendent and engine-driver in the United Kingdom. "Oh, that it were written with an iron pen on a plate," and hung up in every engine-shed!

I also attach no small share of the blame to Mr. Hudson. However gifted that gentleman may be with extraordinary acquirements for the getting up of new lines, laying schemes and plans for amalgamations, &c. &c.—all the praise that is due to his "gigantic mind" I freely grant; but one thing he has ever shown himself egregiously to fall short of—he appears to be totally wrong in his calculations as to locomotive management. The saving of sixpence or eightpence a day upon the wages of enginemen and firemen, and sanctioning the putting on of inexperienced cheap hands to run the trains, proved his unbounded admiration of economy. It was his imprudent acts in this most important department that first brought him to be publicly noticed; but what a sacrifice of human life the measures then adopted and unfortunately copied by

others, have occasioned! He never suggested one single thing of importance in locomotive management to add to the better safety of the traveller. Well does Mr. Hudson know, indeed we all know, the tens of thousands of pounds' worth of property his schemes have demolished. Before I leave the Midland, I must remark, that about the same time that Mr. Scott installed Wheatley, Mr. Steele, a foreman, put on at Masborough station two persons of the same description. They are pilots when required, and consequently another fatal collision in the same quarter need not be wondered at, but as a matter of course looked for. How satisfactory this must be to the traveller!

Before I proceed to give a few more hints to the Superintendents of all the principal railways from Bristol to Hull, and thence to the Channel, I beg leave to repeat what I have often stated before, that whatever I may deem it necessary to complain of, it is from no vindictive feeling towards any one; it is solely with a view to endeavour to arrive at an improvement of locomotive management to ensure the greater safety of the traveller. I can assure travellers that the railways are the safest mode of travelling, and that the chances of accident are few and far between, if the lines be prudently worked. I may state, that many of my former hints have not been entirely disregarded, but my most vital recommendations have still to be complied with before true safety can be attained. I would call the attention of Directors and Superintendents to a very important particular, and entreat of them not to overlook it. It is a sacred truth that all mankind are "liable to fall," and I have shown that our great railway king is not to be excepted. It is an absurd rule for Railway Directors to copy the laws of the "Medes and Persians," a plan that is too much resorted to, namely, that if an intelligent and experienced servant commit a fault, the unfortunate man is doomed by this unalterable law to instant dismissal. I do not say that it is not just to do so in some instances, but in making the rule general, it is fraught with much evil. Before the dismissal of an experienced servant, Directors and Superintendents should fully investigate and well consider the matter. It looks so fiendish that Superintendents should discharge men from caprice, without a real fault, that your readers will scarcely credit it; it is so, however, and when those men are likely to get another situation of a similar kind, they write ambiguously to the employers, and prevent the man getting the place. Take the case of a pointsman who commits a fault. Under the existing law he is immediately discharged, without the least consideration who is to fill his place; the first man that comes in the way is appointed; qualifications are no object, provided he is backed by influence. Here is a man placed in one of the most important situations on a railway, although humble, as to safety; he gets a long string of rules about the use of signals, and perhaps he also has three or four sets of points to attend to, for which he receives only a few verbal instructions, and is then left to commence his work in a bewildered state, scarcely knowing whether to turn to the right hand or the left. I almost forgot to mention his last injunction, under pain of dismissal, which must be attended to paramount to all others—that on no account shall he allow a superior officer to pass without *doffing* his hat! I should say that a suitable fine inflicted several

times would be attended with far more beneficial effects than instant dismissal. The same observations apply to an engineman, with this difference, that he is the more exposed to temptation by getting intoxicated; but the passengers' jeopardy can be prevented by the vigilance of the petty Superintendent. Here again there is an evil to overcome, namely, that many of these petty Superintendents set the example. A suitable fine for not being fit to go out with his train would lead to his amendment, while his sudden discharge, and an inexperienced man being placed in his stead, lead to the destruction of life and property. Wheatley's case was exactly in point, for he supplanted an old and experienced man of the name of Spinks, who was discharged by the caprice of Mr. Steele.

A few weeks ago you gave in your paper a notice of an accident that took place on the Bristol and Gloucester Railway, which was nearly attended with much loss of life. You did not enter into particulars because you understood that General Pasley and the Directors were to make inquiry. I remarked at the time to a friend, that there was no possibility of the public ever knowing the result of their inquiry, unless they could attach the whole blame to the engineman, or guard, or switchman. If a higher official is to blame it is sure to be kept a profound secret. Since then I have made particular inquiry on the spot. The result of my inquiry is to the effect that the whole blame must be attached to Mr. M'Connell, for allowing the luggage-engines to get out of repair. This is just in keeping with his general management, for almost all his engines are in the same dilapidated state. If Superintendents in England had the fear of being brought to justice, as Mr. Paton of the Edinburgh and Glasgow was, it would lead to much more caution on their parts. The accident referred to took place near to the Standwich Junction. The Great Western and Bristol run nearly parallel to each other at this place for some distance, the Western descending, the Bristol ascending. The luggage-train which left Bristol had come to a dead stand at this spot for nearly an hour, in consequence of the engine being so much out of repair, that it was unable to proceed with the load. The down mail-train from London became due, and the men on the luggage-train took off their signal-lamps that that train might not bring up. The night was dark, and at a distance it would have been impossible for the Western mail engineman to distinguish which of the lines was obstructed. Knowing that nothing was due on their own line, they heard a train approaching which they naturally concluded was the Western mail, but unfortunately it was a special-train from Bristol, which pitched with a terrific crash into the luggage-train, throwing off the two enginemen, the engine-driver escaping with a severe cut on the mouth, which will disfigure his face for life; the stoker fortunately escaping with a sprained ankle only. The engine was literally "smashed," and many of the trucks demolished. It is but justice to state that these luggage-engines are of the best construction; none better for the purpose can be procured; it is therefore a pity that the Directors should continue to be so blind to Mr. M'Connell's management. In so disgraceful a condition was the *Exigant* engine, that it could not propel half the load it was calculated for, and accustomed to



perform. As a further proof of Mr. M'Connell's notorious mismanagement, I may state, that when Mr. Shanter had charge of the line, the average consumption of coke was 23 to 25 pounds per mile; at present, under Mr. M'Connell, the average is nearly 40 pounds per mile. Thus, while he boasts of saving in repairs, he throws away in another way, independent of the continual destruction of property which he takes care to throw upon the shoulders of others. I notice in your paper of to-day, that Sir Samuel Crompton had addressed a letter to the Earl of Dalhousie on the subject of the gross mismanagement of this line. I can assure the worthy Baronet that he might as well have addressed his letter to the Chairman of the Thames Coal-heavers' Association. The Board of Trade have no control over the railways. The Committee of the body I refer to, has just as much control as they have, and Directors know this. As to the management of the luggage on that line, from Bristol to Birmingham, as the Baronet observes, it is far from perfect. I had thought to go into this department before now. I have not space at present, but it shall not be forgotten.

I can assure the worthy Baronet that he has much cause for congratulation that his lady and family did not reach home with broken faces, which is of very common occurrence on this line. You also give the letter of "A Traveller," complaining of the delay of the express-train. If he had gone across to the Junction station he could have been informed there of innumerable instances in which they have favoured that Company by delaying their train to meet the Gloucester delays. Before I leave this line I must have one word with Mr. M'Connell regarding his gross inconsistency. You will remember that I gave him full credit for the declaration he made upon oath before the inquest at Defford, that he considered 7*s.* was too little pay for an engineman, and that he wished to see them better paid than they generally were, whereas he has since repeatedly declared to the men whom he wished to run pilot from fifteen to sixteen hours and upwards, that 4*s.* was quite sufficient! He made another strange declaration with reference to the inefficiency of the signals. He said they had improved signals in progress, and that they had communicated so to the Board of Trade. This was true to a certain extent, but it has only amounted to this, that all the signals he had in progress were two large ones for the Lickey incline. All the other signals on the line are the same as when they were deprecated by the Coroner's jury. No thirty feet posts and lamps have yet been erected. If life should again be lost in consequence, will not the Attorney-General be called upon to perform the same duty as the public Prosecutor of Scotland in the case already referred to?

While at Bristol, I made particular inquiry regarding Mr. Gooch's management of the Great Western. After my visit, in June last, to Paddington, I had occasion to make some severe remarks. Since then the Directors have remedied the principal part; but I would again call upon them to make inquiry into the dangerous state in which the luggage-trains are run. How is it possible for men to be able to run these trains 90 to 100 hours per week? Besides, they are disgracefully paid. They cannot but be over-fatigued by the end of the week, and thereby liable to create the greatest disasters.

In my last I referred to the signal-lamps on the Grand Junction. Mr. Norris deserves great praise for the improvement he has made upon them; but how it is he declines lighting them with gas I cannot divine. Mr. Norris should order better attention to be paid to the signals at Walsall, Whitmore, and Hertford stations. They become very dim at the time they are most required, namely, when the luggage-trains run during the night; and I still am of opinion that the additional man put on at Walsall should be removed half-way to James's Bridge. It would be no more expense to the Company further than a post and signal. I would also call the attention of Mr. Trevethick to the impropriety of allowing the foreman at Manchester to run engines from Crewe to Warrington or Manchester with only the assistance of a cleaner. This is the more dangerous as the party does not know anything about the line or driving, although a foreman. If he cause an accident, which he is sure to do some day or other, much blame will be attached to Mr. T. I know Mr. Norris is much against such dangerous proceedings, and I trust this imprudence will be discontinued, otherwise I shall consider it my duty to mention the name, and enter a little more into particulars.

I have frequently, while treating of this line, found fault with Mr. Allen's management at Crewe. It is gratifying for me to state that he has improved much; I hope he will continue to do so. Too much praise cannot be given him for the very creditable manner in which he has turned out his new and powerful engines; in fact, they are next in superiority to Sharpe's, Brothers, of Manchester. They are superior to Stephenson's late patent; and, with all his great influence in the railway world, Mr. Stephenson must still make further improvement before his house can take the lead. The Liverpool and Manchester Railway I must connect with these observations. Mr. Wood continues to display his wonted zeal for the interest of all connected with the line. Mr. Wood and Mr. Norris should be highly prized by the Directors; for assiduity and firmness of purpose they are not to be surpassed. But it is a pity that they cannot use their influence to get their best hands from being tempted to go abroad. They have lost many since I gave this hint before. I stated that the French contractors were determined to have men from these two well-disciplined lines almost at any price. If they lose a few more, the lines will become second or third rate for efficiency, as is now the case with the London and Birmingham, as I shall presently show.

There is one important matter I nearly forgot to call Mr. Norris's attention to, that is, to request the Superintendents at various stations not to interfere with the duties of the engineers by endeavouring to make them transgress the express rules laid down for their guidance. What can be the use of those rules, if station-masters arrogate to themselves the power to break them? This was the cause of the manslaughter at Nottingham.

One word as to the Manchester and Birmingham Railway. It has been the practice upon this line of late to put on inexperienced youths as enginemen, without sufficient knowledge of the responsibility attached to their situations. Collisions are continually taking place. If anything fatal occur, the drivers ought not to be blamed; the managers

must be brought forward to stand the brunt of the day. When I have more time I shall recur to this line ; in the meantime I hope this hint will be of service.

The Hull and Selby Railway has undergone a very material change for the worse. No sooner had Mr. Gray left for the Brighton than Mr. Cabrey began his old imprudent game of reducing the enginemen's wages, so much so that the whole of Mr. Gray's well-selected men left. The pride they had in their engines was unrivalled. It will soon appear that the small saving will be considerably more than overbalanced by the waste of machinery and consumption of coke. When the half-yearly accounts come out I shall examine this, although there will be, as usual in such cases, a great deal of transmogrification in them, if I may use the expression.

Formerly, every one held forth the London and Birmingham as the very pink of perfection in locomotive management ; and the superiority of its engines was frequently pointed out as an example to all others. I am always sorry to report a retrograde movement, but to be impartial, which always has been my study, I must say that the London and Birmingham has fallen from a first-rate to below a third-rate. This is the common talk amongst all railway individuals around this neighbourhood. The first cause of this falling off cannot be attributed to any one. Formerly the trains ran much lighter, and at a much less speed, and the engines were well attended to ; consequently they were quite able to perform the work they were manufactured to do. But a change came over the times. Excessive speed was resorted to, with an additional weight to the trains from increased traffic, thereby giving the engines much greater work than they were ever calculated or expected to do. This, however, will soon be overcome, for almost every week there are new and powerful engines arriving to supply the places of the old. But the next cause which is throwing this line into the shade will not now be so easily overcome, for it is the evil I have so particularly referred to in the early part of this letter. I shall explain it as briefly as I can. There is at present much demand, and great temptations are held out, for the best qualified enginemen to go abroad, and the petty Superintendents of this line (with the exception of Mr. Walker, of Camden Town), have got so excessively arrogant and overbearing in their demeanour towards their (as they consider) inferiors, that men of spirit will not now submit to them. The practice is, that if anything get wrong, which it is the duty of these Superintendents to correct, they do not go about it in a proper manner, but walk up to the man and attack him at once in language so foul that it would disgrace a Billingsgate fish-fag. This causes a reply of the same sort, and the matter which the foreman should have mentioned in a becoming manner is lost sight of, for the whole attention is directed to settle the quarrel of foul words. The engineman immediately says he will not remain on the line to be thus abused, and, as a matter of course, leaves upon the first offer. A number of the best men have left, and more are to follow. The consequence is, that there are men running trains on that line whom it would be the advantage of the Company to pay 7s. per day to stop at home. As for firemen, it is quite a burlesque upon the name ; they

should be called "idleboys" to the engine. I do not state these truths from hearsay; I do it from my own personal knowledge and observation. In proof of the engines being turned out by Mr. Johnstone in a disgraceful state, I may state that his luggage-engines are often overtaken, and very unexpectedly, by the passenger-trains; and no later than last Saturday night, the luggage-train came to a dead stand within about two miles of Birmingham, which delayed the passenger-train above an hour. The Derby passengers were obliged to get out and walk that distance, to be able to get on with the Derby train. The management on that night was disgraceful. Then, on Sunday, a similar thing happened to the engine which was sent from Birmingham to bring the train from Leamington, and which is not fit to drag a cargo of "Irish pigs," and Johnstone knows this perfectly well. Some of the passengers in that train informed me they could have walked to Coventry as soon as the train. I could follow up this subject to a much greater length. I shall pursue it no further, however, for the present. I have one word more to say to Mr. Bruyeres. With all his continual flurry, he has not got his orders attended to yet in a proper manner. How is it that he does not cause the drivers of the ballast-waggons to be more careful in getting out of the way of the passenger-trains? On Monday night last, this carelessness nearly caused a serious accident. Near Sudbury station, the line is being relaid. The third-class train from Birmingham came up (driven by Martin Cole) while a train of rails was standing on the same line. The third-class train "pitched into" it, the engineman escaping by leaping, the passengers with a fright and a jumble. This collision caused the delay of the York mail and another train, which reached London an hour and a half late. There can be no excuse for placing the public in this jeopardy, for Mr. Bruyeres must know that Cole has of late been overtaken repeatedly. I appeal to the guards for the truth of this. I have no doubt Mr. Bruyeres will throw the blame on Mr. Madigan, the contractor; at all events, the blame rests with one or other of those two gentlemen. If any one had been killed, it would have puzzled them not a little to get out of the scrape. I beg leave to give Mr. Bruyeres a hint, that there is to be (I have it from first authority) an offer made to old and experienced guards to leave their present situations. I merely warn him and all other Superintendents of this, that they may not get into the same dilemma that Locomotive Superintendents have already got into.

It appears (from the note which you did me the favour to transmit) that my last letter gave apparent offence to William Perry, the half-and-half foreman of the fitters at Romford station, on the Eastern Counties' line. He is offended with me for stating that Mr. Fairnighough had put on three fitters who were not sufficiently acquainted with the running of an engine. Perry declares that they are of "transcendent abilities." This may be so; I never questioned it, nor do I now; but I fearlessly repeat, that they are totally unfit for running trains with safety, they never having been sufficiently bred for enginemen. Their qualifications as fitters may be "transcendant" but if they are no better than Perry's, they have little to brag of. May I call to this Perry's remembrance the "talent" he displayed when under Mr. Alcard at War-

rington, when he repaired the tender of the *Doctor Dalton* engine and others? He has much to learn before he can be able, as he says he wishes, to cleanse the railways "of their present impurities."

I have now a few words to say to Mr. Scott in his new capacity. He, no doubt, will remember that it is exactly three years to-morrow since I first took notice of him, when he assisted the "new and inexperienced engineman" out of Leeds with the mail-train, being the first day after the ever-to-be-remembered "sweep" on the North Midland Railway. In his new office, I would desire him to call to his remembrance the dreadful calamities which that "sweep" caused, and to beware of the advice of Mr. Cabrey, and that he now will pilot himself clear of such quick-sands. He has followed a gentleman possessed of talent far superior to his own, though, in point of practical experience, I allow Mr. Scott to be second almost to none. He has a number of very excellent men under him. They cannot be outdone for knowledge and experience in their avocation; and, therefore, he should take care that they do not leave him; one of the original hands on the line has left; he must take care that others do not follow.

This now brings me to the South-Eastern and Mr. Cudworth. I am sorry to state that notwithstanding all I have said to him, his management is anything but satisfactory. The Directors seem to be of the same opinion, for it is said they would very much like Mr. Benjamin Cubitt back again. They should have held that gentleman fast while they had him. I mentioned before he left that they would find it a very difficult matter to fill his shoes. One possessed of such abilities is not to be met with every day. Mr. Cubitt is no upstart; he knows the responsibility of such a situation. If the amalgamation be carried out, which I hope it will, it would be desirable that the joint Direction should, if possible, induce him to return. Mr. Cudworth has put on some men, whom I could name, who were so ignorant of signals that they did not know the use of an extra tail red lamp. He uses the old foolish argument (if argument it can be called) of Messrs. Cabrey and M'Connell, "Oh, I can get plenty of men!" True, but what sort of men? He is one of those Superintendents who appear as if they disregarded the sacrifice of life and property. It is much to be wished that some legal measure were enacted to put an end to such recklessness.

I am still of the same opinion that I expressed in my last, that it is useless to call General Pasley's attention to the foregoing. I must notice, that the General has travelled much during the past month or two, but his travels and inspections avail nothing. There is one "improvement," however, I cannot but notice. From the ridicule to which I exposed him, for shutting himself up in a close carriage for the purpose of inspecting a line, he has of late invariably ridden upon the foot-plate of the engine, but in most cases his inspection is very little better than under his former plan, for it has generally been with an express-train, running at from forty-five to fifty and sometimes sixty miles an hour; and he himself attended, as usual, by two or more Directors, to the dinner-table, never leaving him until passed on to the next line! In this manner how can General Pasley ever arrive at the true state of affairs? If he has power, why has he not seen that the new signals

have not been put upon the Gloucester line? As, however, he has practically no power, what is the use of incurring all the expenses he creates? I have often noticed that my appearance on a line has caused much more stir than ever did the General's.

I intended to address a few words to Sir Robert Peel upon some observations that fell from him on the cutting the first turf of the Trent Valley Railway, but as he has resigned his official rank I shall defer them, and address the substance of what I intended to say to him to his successor, whoever he may be, at the opening of Parliament. Before then, my annual retrospect of our locomotive management will be before the public, and in that letter I shall have more space than in this to illustrate more fully the various topics touched upon in the present communication.

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## LETTER XLII.

Birmingham, January 17, 1846.

I PROMISED in my last that my next letter should comprise a retrospective view of the locomotive management of this country during the past year. Since then, you may remember, I informed you in a private note that I had deferred that letter, in consequence of the very lamentable accident on the Norfolk Railway, until I had made full inquiry into the real cause of the occurrence. Were these "accidents," as they are called, peculiar to one railway, I should feel it my duty to be much more minute than I usually am in my strictures; but the general system is so disgraceful, that the very nature of the working of the locomotive schemes involves almost of necessity distressing and fatal results. I have found in whatever direction I have travelled the grossest mismanagement prevailing, and under precisely the same circumstances that I so strongly denounced three years ago. I need not speak of causes that are known to the public at large, but of those with which every one is more or less familiar who is acquainted with railway locomotives. Let it not be said that as railway men are familiar with the cause and dreadful effects, the case needs no expounding. I maintain that it does, and further, that the general system needs reforming; and the surest and shortest way of effecting that most desirable consummation is to expose the locomotive absurdities, iniquities, and dangerous results, until the railway traveller fully comprehend his danger; and this will surely cause distrust, and then Railway Directors will see the propriety of examining more minutely into the very many plans that are resorted to by upstart Superintendents. It is only those mushrooms that I have to lay such heavy charges against. Scarce a week passes but one or other of these gentry resort to some expedient dangerous to life and property. Should they be fortunate for a time, their continual theme of each to his Directors is, "Look what I have accomplished—no other has ever done the like." Poor silly Directors! They never calculate upon the ultimate results. I think all my previous letters have contained evidence enough to authorise my denunciations. If not, let

the strictures in this letter be added to them. They will tell their own tale; there are hundreds who can corroborate the truths I bring forward.

Again, I ask, are not such circumstances disgraceful to her Majesty's Lords of the Privy Council? I think I am justified in agitating for Government interference; and having once commenced, I intend to persevere till more certain safety for railway travellers is obtained. I am a firm believer that that mode of travelling is the best and safest; but the locomotive management must undergo a very material change before I can give it my full confidence.

I have long since given up all hope that General Pasley will ever propose any amendment; for as I have repeatedly remarked, he has scarcely ever seen any cause of complaint, although so many lives have been lost, his sentiments being usually an echo of the opinions of Directors and officials. The delinquencies of locomotive management are increasing instead of diminishing; but this must not be attributed to the nature of railways, for I have several times suggested a simple and almost perfect remedy. I grant that many mistakes and short-comings must be overlooked in General Pasley, but he appears to have the confidence of the Government and the Board of Trade as a superlatively good Inspector, while there exist, and I have freely commented upon, the perils and disasters that surround us, through his extraordinary, and as I say very culpable, forbearance. I do not expect marvels of him, but the public have a right to demand of this officer of the Government impartiality, determination, and energy, and that he should disregard all fulsome flattery and pretended deference which Directors extend to him. The manner in which he receives such fulsomeness shows a vain and weak mind. He ought to apply himself fearlessly to the performance of the duty he is entrusted with. We know that some men, even when convinced, continue to act foolishly, until by some accident they are compelled to reform. I trust that General Pasley will have now seen more than sufficient accidents to make him change his opinions with comfort to himself. It is astonishing that railway delinquencies are perpetuated, notwithstanding almost every one has come to condemn them. It is to be lamented that the time has not yet arrived to induce our Railway Inspector to listen to sound reason; nay, blood shed upon blood has not yet had the desired effect. Is there not something in the present locomotive management suggestive of hope that the Government may be led to dispense with the ignorance and imbecility of General Pasley and his obstinacy in what is wrong? I would beg leave to ask General Pasley a few questions:—

Have you ever had the moral courage publicly to reprove the misconduct of Directors or Superintendents?

Have you ever proposed any measure that would cause that important body, enginemen, to be put upon a better footing, so as to ascertain their qualifications before they are entrusted with the lives of the public?

Have you ever suggested one single thing that would ensure greater safety to the railway traveller?

What have you been doing whilst all those objects have remained so much desired?

If General Pasley will permit, I shall answer the last question in truth. I say then to him, "You have been squandering the public money in pleasure trips with Directors (I cannot say inspections), and the Directors in their turn have treated you to luxurious entertainments in order to silence you."

The inquest upon the bodies of the two unfortunate men who lost their lives at the late accident on the Norfolk Railway having been brought to a close, and the verdict being now before the public, I wish, Mr. Editor, to call your attention to this important subject, because I am dissatisfied with that verdict; and I think I shall have as little difficulty in proving that it is not what it ought to be, as I have had in other cases of a similar nature. The blame is thrown upon the deceased driver, because he cannot speak for himself. If he had been spared, I have no doubt he would have prevented the erroneous opinions of Mr. Bidder and General Pasley from having any weight with the jury. The verdict was, "Accidental death, caused by the imprudence of the engine-driver running at an excessive speed." I maintain there was no evidence given to warrant such a verdict. General Pasley and Mr. Bidder could only suppose such and such a thing, for neither of them was present at the occurrence. In my opinion, there was evidence given that would warrant a different verdict, while there are other circumstances connected with that affair to justify this conclusion, as I shall endeavour to show. In the first place, Mr. Bidder was an interested party. He is the Engineer of the line, and of course it was to his credit to show, if possible, that the line was in perfect condition, and that all his other arrangements were good. Under these circumstances, it is natural to suppose that he would wish to have a verdict against the driver. I shall prove to you in another letter (for I shall not have space in this), that the Norfolk Railway has never been in perfect condition, and that, as regards signals, they have been, and still are, of the most imperfect description, to say nothing of the inefficiency of the men who are entrusted with them. I have abundant evidence to substantiate these allegations. The platelayer, Johnson, was also personally interested, because he was culpable in not having a red signal on the line from six hundred to eight hundred yards distant from the place where the railway was undergoing repair. Immediately after the accident, one of the platelayers was questioned about the nature of it, when he stated they had a rail out, but that they had put it in again, although they had not time to "key" it down. He was then asked if, in consequence of having occasion to take up a rail, there was a red signal put up at the proper distance to give a coming train warning. He said, "No, they had not put up such a signal, but they had a green flag about eighty yards distant, which signified caution." This man thought he had gone a step too far, for he wound up his observations by saying, "It did not matter, for engineers did not pay any attention to signals," a most unfounded accusation. A green signal, in this instance, was not the proper signal; and, besides, eighty yards was by far too short a distance, when the line was in the state described. Johnson declared to the jury that the engine was running at the rate of sixty miles an hour. Now I fearlessly contradict him on this point.



Neither he nor any other person whatever can state exactly at what speed a train runs past him. With reference to Mr. Bidder's testimony, it is the most unskilful and ridiculous that was ever given before a Coroner and a jury, and given, too, by a Civil Engineer! Let me call your particular attention, Sir, to this Engineer's evidence. In the first place, he says, the permanent way at this particular spot "was as good a piece as any in England." How could this be? If it were thus excellent, where was the necessity of taking up the rails and relaying them? 2nd. "On examining the engine, after the accident, he found the steam-regulator indicated that the steam had been turned off suddenly, and he attributed the accident to the impropriety of the engine-driver proceeding at a very high velocity, and suddenly shutting off the steam." Sir, with all due deference to Mr. Bidder, I beg to say, that the regulator indicated no such thing. Mr. Bidder saw it was shut, but whether this was done by degrees or not, he could not tell. But, allowing that the steam *was* shut off suddenly, I can assure Mr. Bidder it could not have led to the practical results he would infer. He must have paid very little attention to the working of a locomotive engine, otherwise he never would have shown such ignorance. I would fearlessly refer this to any old experienced engineman in the kingdom, not one of whom would corroborate Mr. Bidder's statement. It is the invariable practice with enginemen, particularly when they have outside cylinders, whenever they at any time attain a high velocity, if the engine should oscillate a little, or, as an engineman would say, "rock," suddenly to shut off the steam, without fear or danger, and the engine immediately becomes more steady, the power being taken from the pistons. This must appear plain on the most casual consideration, because, when the pistons are at work, the strain of the steam-power is applied alternately on each side of the engine. Mr. Bidder next contradicts his plate-layer, for the latter had stated that all the rails were perfect; whereas Mr. Bidder said, "Moreover, the line, near Thetford being under repair, it required particular caution in passing over it, and if the deceased did not exercise that caution, it showed a great want of precaution on his part." If the plate-layer spoke the truth, the deceased had no need to use any particular caution previous to being close at hand, for he was in the midst of the imperfect rails before he was aware. The want of precaution was entirely on the part of Mr. Bidder and his men, in not having proper signals upon the line. Lastly, Mr. Bidder stated that "he had traversed the line frequently, even as late as Saturday, when he was perfectly satisfied of the complete state of all the works." If Mr. Bidder was satisfied, no other person could be so. Let any disinterested individual traverse the Norfolk line, and he will find the management of it notoriously defective, Coleman, the chief guard's evidence, appears to have been totally overlooked by the jury; though, for my own part, I certainly should have placed more confidence in his testimony than in that of either Mr. Bidder or General Pasley. The guard declared that he had "timed" the train, (this was his business), and that, just before the accident, they were not running more than thirty-five miles per hour. Now, where could better testimony be found than this? I maintain that Pickering, the driver, could not have

attained the speed of sixty miles on hour, for he was running up an incline of 1 in 100. On reaching the top, the incline down is 1 in 800, which is approaching to a level, and he had only proceeded about 100 yards down this slight incline when the accident occurred. I would appeal to any experienced engineman if the driver could possibly have arrived at the alleged speed under such circumstances?

There is another important point which appears also to have been overlooked, namely, as to the rail which went through the fire-box, and then through the boiler. This must have been the unkeyed rail spoken of by the plate-layer, for the guard declared that when Pickering shut off the steam, he looked to one side and shook his head. The driver must at this time have seen something wrong, and no doubt it was the rail he saw raised; for immediately the engine was enveloped in steam, and that steam must have come from the incision made in the boiler by the rail; certainly not from shutting the regulator suddenly. Besides, the men must have seen the approaching danger, for, upon examining the tender, the brake was found to be very firmly screwed down; so much so, that both men had been at it together. Under all these circumstances, there can be no doubt but the accident must lie at the door of those who have charge of the line, in not using more caution with the signals, and from plate-layers allowing a train to proceed over an unkeyed rail.

It is passing strange that gentlemen who attach C. E. to their names can be so very inconsistent in their remarks as they sometimes are. We have just seen Mr. Bidder accusing the unfortunate driver of running sixty miles an hour, while he has been the greatest advocate for that speed upon the narrow gauge, endeavouring, if possible, to outstrip Mr. Brunel and the broad gauge, and that, too, under the sanction of a Government Commission! If Mr. Bidder be correct in his opinion of poor Pickering, how can he be justified in encouraging that speed by his personal presence on the foot-plate of the engine?

What will General Pasley and Mr. Bidder think of the projected engine of Messrs. Brunel and Gooch? They have decided upon a plan, and have calculated that the engine will run eighty miles per hour; it is to outdo the Atmospheric. This engine is to have 18-inch cylinders, 2-foot stroke, 8-foot driving wheel, and an increased diameter of boiler, to contain 270 tubes. If you had not been so much pressed for room, I should have made a few remarks on the Great Western line, but I must postpone them until my next.

I must once more give Mr. Norris his due meed of praise for extreme attention to the responsible duties entrusted to him upon the Grand Junction Railway. He has now erected a very superior signal betwixt Walsall and James's Bridge. It does him much credit. From its size and altitude, it can easily be observed by the conductor of a train from either of the two places. The keeper can discern the signal at Walsall, and make the same signal, which can be seen at James's Bridge; so that, with common prudence, a collision is almost impossible at the now busy station at Walsall. The other improvements and signals of Mr. Norris are highly praiseworthy; and it would be to the credit of a great many Superintendents if they did but take a lesson from Mr. Norris's

general arrangements, for if they did, the public would be much benefited. Some of your readers may imagine, from the locality in which I reside, being so near to the Grand Junction, and from my repeated laudations of Mr. Norris, that probably I am an intimate friend of that gentleman. This is not the fact. I have never spoken to him, nor am I certain that he knows my person, although I have known his for years. It is his adherence to a well-regulated line of conduct that I so highly praise—personally I know him not. While I thus esteem the public conduct of Mr. Norris, I am sorry that I find it still my duty to complain strongly of the two individuals next in responsibility on this line—I mean Messrs. Trevethick and Allen. As for Mr. Trevethick, I consider him as nothing better than an expensive supernumerary; nor is this my own opinion merely, but the opinion of every one connected with the line. He is not possessed of sufficient mechanical judgment for the situation he holds. If Mr. Allen suggests anything, however ridiculous, Mr. Trevethick cannot, from incapacity, check or contradict him. When Mr. Allen favours any man, whatever fault that man may commit, Allen says it is all right—he shall see to it; and the matter is then hushed up. On the other hand, if Mr. Allen has a particular pique against one, and that man commits the most trivial offence, he will complain to Mr. Trevethick, and get him to inflict the heaviest penalty he is empowered to impose,—which Mr. Trevethick does, without in the least troubling himself to inquire whether he is acting justly betwixt man and man. If the Directors continue to allow those two gentlemen to act as they do, I can assure them they will have much cause to repent it when it is too late. I could give many instances of their course of proceeding, but for the present one will suffice; should I have occasion to return to this subject, I shall give you a long list. There are two goods'-trains which leave Crewe for Birmingham twice a day; the one betwixt 12 and 1 A.M., the other about 4 A.M. Richard Morris, the driver of the first train, is one of Mr. Allen's *protégés*, and one of the most reckless men that ever drove an engine; and he has often given proof of this. A short time ago, at Stafford, he made a most unpardonable "pitch-in" into a goods'-train, passing heedlessly the signals, and nearly causing the destruction of life; for the waggon he struck had been just a minute before occupied by a number of men who had the charge of a train of Irish pigs. If those men had been a minute longer in getting out, every one would probably have been killed, for the waggon was shivered to pieces, and a great many more waggons besides. Mr. Allen carried him through this business, as he has also done in another "accident," which took place at Crewe on the 10th instant. It may be proper to remark, that in the locomotive rules for the guidance of the drivers, it is expressly laid down, that no engine-man shall screw down the safety-valves to a greater pressure than 75 lbs.; but it has been the invariable practice of this reckless fellow to screw down his valves to 90 lbs., which is as far as he can go; and not content with this over-pressure, he locks them down, so that if the pressure should become 100 lbs. or upwards, the valves cannot stir. It has often been remarked by persons on the line, that he would, some day or other, lose his own life and destroy that of his fireman. For the truth of this

statement I would refer to Mr. Parker, who is aware of it, though Morris not being one of his men, he has no control over him. Mr. Trevethick and Mr. Allen were alone responsible for this recklessness. Instead, however, of Mr. Allen finding fault, he indirectly encourages him, for this reason, that by acting so, the driver makes his engine do more work, thus running heavier trains than other men could with the regulated pressure. If a man should object to a heavy train that he could not get on with it, Allen will immediately say, "look at Morris, he can do it easily enough." Remonstrance is of no use. Sir, you made a very just remark in your last week's paper, while ably treating of railway management, that "the pitcher may go often to the well without being broken, let it be carried ever so carelessly, but when the smash does take place, people soon find out where the blame lies." Here is a case in point; Morris had been lucky a long time in locking his safety-valves, but last Saturday morning produced the "smash." He got his engine attached to the train at Crewe. Having made all ready to start, and, as usual, screwed down and locked the valves, he left the foot-plate for a few minutes while the fireman was arranging his coke on the tender, and, during this short interval, the steam got up beyond what the boiler was able to bear, when off flew the steam-dome of the engine (it was a dome without a flaw), and was carried from thirty to forty yards. The fireman narrowly escaped being scalded to death. If the men had been on the foot-plate, they most assuredly would have been killed. Mr. Allen is more to blame than the man (he is aware of this, but not a word has been said to the man about it), for he knew well the danger. Mr. Trevethick is not so much to blame, for he is not so well acquainted with the capabilities of a locomotive engine, though he fills a very responsible and important situation. As a proof of his incapacity, I may repeat what I believe I have mentioned in a previous letter, that, on one occasion, when Mr. Locke was at Crewe with another gentleman, Mr. Trevethick was in attendance, and in passing over the works where there was a pilot-engine standing, Mr. Locke turned round and asked Mr. Trevethick what pressure upon the square inch the engine was blowing off at? Mr. Trevethick mounted the foot-plate, but could not give a satisfactory answer. Mr. Locke, surprised, said (though not in terms so refined), "a pretty sort of Superintendent you are;" and turned upon his heel! If Mr. Trevethick had not been recommended by Mr. Locke to the situation, his days would have been numbered from that hour.

Lord Alford stated, at the cutting of the first sod of the Bradford Branch Railway, that the Company were fortunate in being in connection with the London and Birmingham, for it was one of the best managed lines in England. Sir, it was so at one time, but I regret to say is not so now. If his Lordship had been in the 4 P.M. York mail-train from Rugby, about three weeks ago, he would have changed his opinion, as many others have done of late. In my last letter I fully explained the cause of this unfortunate alteration, namely, employing engine-drivers totally unfit for the duty; and I also stated that it would be to the advantage of the Company were they to give some of them their wages to stop at home. The following circumstance is a proof, and there are

many others beside. One of the men referred to, of the name of William George, committed one of his usual blunders at the time above referred to. He arrived at Leighton station with a train of goods: this train has to "shunt" on to the siding at that place, and wait until the York mail-train passes. When the York mail was in the act of passing, George started with his train, crossed the line, and "pitched" obliquely into the broad-side of the last three carriages of the mail-train, and overturned and smashed them. Fortunately not one individual was in any of the carriages! All this occurred from downright carelessness; for even if the man had cleared the train, he was violating an express and very important rule, namely, that no engineman shall follow another train until a certain specified time has elapsed. I have known the time when Mr. Bury would not have let such men have the charge of an engine. He was *then* the most particular Superintendent in England, in the selection of his enginemen; but these days appear to have gone by. If such mismanagement be persisted in, I feel assured that there will ere long be a woeful tale to put upon record, for the goods'-trains are continually being delayed on the road, from fourteen and sixteen to eighteen hours between London and Birmingham, impeding and delaying the passenger-trains, besides incurring the constant risk of a fatal collision. If such an event should take place, an awful responsibility will rest somewhere. Another of these men, from his stupidity in the management of his engine, has nearly caused death four times within a short period. I was much surprised when I saw him first put on as a driver; and if he ever should be so unfortunate as to cause death, there will be no difficulty in rating his qualifications. It is to be hoped that Mr. Bury will take a general review of his new hands, and return to his former mode of selection. His sentiments used to be, "that engine-drivers were the most important body of men employed upon a railway." Of late years a sad change has come over the times, for too many of the Superintendents treat the occupation as next to "child's play." Anything in the shape of a man they think quite competent. They must be taught a different lesson, for the public will get tired of this every-day jeopardy.

In my last I noticed the Hull and Selby Railway, and Mr. Cabrey's new management. I stated that his first step on entering upon the superintendentship of that line was reduction of wages. This proceeding caused all Mr. Gray's superior staff to leave, and they were replaced by unqualified men at the reduced rate. I expressed a doubt whether Mr. Cabrey would not find, before six months had expired, that he would lose ten times the amount he saved in wages by the destruction of machinery and consumption of coke; and from my inquiries in the interval, I have learned that a third more coke is now consumed. The destruction of machinery, carriages, and waggons alone, caused from the inefficiency of the new hands, will cost more in repairs than would considerably more than pay all the enginemen and firemen upon that line for two years! For example, there are the complete wreck of the *Vulcan* engine; the smashing of waggons at Cliff and Selby; the destruction of carriages at Castleford, where the passengers were hurt, but not killed; and besides, there is the constant complaint of the carriers

from the delay of their goods. I mentioned before that Mr. Gray left the entire stock of engines in as good repair as if new; they are now all crippled. They are not able to do half the work they formerly did; and were they to be re-valued at present, they would not be estimated at one-half the value they bore when Mr. Cabrey entered upon his office. This is a revival of the old North Midland "economy," and done too under the eye of Mr. Hudson!

I have another example to give of recklessness from the employment of incompetent drivers on the Midland Railway. The occurrence took place on Saturday, the 4th instant, at half-past five o'clock, about a mile from the Leeds station. The York goods'-train, with two engines (although only twenty-four waggons were attached, and although running down an incline), when within a mile of its destination, came to a dead stand. They had no light in the tail signal-lamp, though they blocked up the line. At this time a luggage-train from Derby came up also with two engines. The driver in charge of the first engine of this latter train, on approaching the station, had to unhook his engine, and should have proceeded cautiously on to the station, and allowed the other engine to bring in the train. He went recklessly on, contrary to his regular instructions, pitched into the York train, which had again started, and stopped its career and his own; just then up came the Derby train, and "pitched" into the cause of the disaster, overturning the engine on its broadside, the second engine rising over it, and the tender following upside down. The collision was tremendous. Both lines became blocked up, which caused the delay of six down-trains, and eight out-trains, for betwixt eight and nine hours. It was thought at first that two men were killed, but, fortunately, they all escaped with little more than fright, though the brakesman had a very narrow escape, for the brake-waggon was shivered to pieces. Is it not surprising that Mr. Kirtley will not select better men? He can occasionally get good men, but they will not submit to his parsimony, and he blames the Directors that he has no power to give reasonable wages. Because life was not sacrificed, the matter was, comparatively speaking, hushed up; if death had ensued, would it not have been proper to indict the Manager of the line, as in the Scotch case? The York men were the first in fault. The one, William Steel, had been an occasional driver for about six months; the other, Richard Nelson, a very short time a fireman, and a driver only between three or four months. Mr. Cabrey must have rated their qualifications at a very low rate, and the men must have considered themselves very insignificant, for their wages were only 4s. per day. In this instance, they gave full proof of their unfitness, for the one had the *Express* coupled engine, with 15-inch cylinders, the other the *Victoria* train-engine. If the former engine had been in complete repair, and in proper hands, it would have taken a train of double the number of waggons with ease. The brakesman also was inexperienced in his duty, which accounts for the want of a light in the signal. It was his first time out. He had been a yard watchman between two and three months. How can Mr. Cabrey be justified in entrusting such men with a train of goods upon a line where there is so much passenger traffic? The driver (Jackson) who caused the damage,

drove the Midland No. 6 engine, which was literally shivered to pieces. He must, or should have been, well known to Mr. Kirtley; he was a fitter, and a very short time a driver on the Manchester and Leeds, and discharged from that line for a similar act. Moreover, Mr. Kirtley must have known him from what he has committed since he came on the Midland, which was only two months ago. During that short time, however, he has given ample proof of his inefficiency. Previous to what I have related, he committed three or four blunders. On one of these occasions, he caused the destruction of several second-class carriages, besides other damage; still Mr. Kirtley continued to entrust him with an engine, because he was "cheap." When will this *pseudo*-economy have an end? I would once more beseech Mr. Hudson to turn his mind to this most important and neglected department of railways. Surely the frequency of such notorious cases may cause him to reflect. He has the power to amend; and if he still declines, he must be held culpable. I have no desire to rob him of the legitimate rewards which his towering ambition has attained, and which his wonderful aptitude for railway business commands. I must, however, confess my utter astonishment that any class of men—much less such men as Mr. Hudson—should for so long be fooled by such Superintendents as a Cabrey or a M'Connell.

I have been compelled in this letter to go far beyond the limits I originally prescribed to myself, and this necessarily keeps back my retrospective review. I shall endeavour to send it next week; and my promised letter to Sir Robert Peel on our Railway System shall follow in due course.

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### LETTER XLIII.

Birmingham, February 11, 1846.

UPON reading in your journal the report of the speech which Mr. Hudson delivered before the assembled proprietors of the York and North Midland Railway at the late half-yearly meeting, my attention was forcibly arrested by an expression he made use of, to the effect "that he had much pleasure in congratulating the proprietors that the locomotive stock was equal to any in the world." This, Sir, startled me, for I knew that, but little more than two months ago, the working of the York and North Midland line was nearly at a stand from want of locomotive power; and hence I could not make myself believe that Mr. Hudson had spoken the truth. To put my mind at rest, I examined the mystical accounts, but could find nothing in support of my own views. Since then, however, having occasion to be in Manchester, I resolved, before I returned home, to visit York, to ascertain if I were right in the conclusion I had arrived at, that Mr. Hudson had been himself deceived, or was deceiving his constituency. On arriving at York, I found, upon entering on my inquiry, that I had considerable difficulty to contend with, for my last letter had given Mr. Cabrey very great offence, from the exposure there set forth of his Hull and Selby management. If I had had

one-twentieth part of the power of General Pasley's official position, my course would have been easy, let Mr. Cabrey's mood have been what it might; but, nevertheless, spite of all the obstacles I had to encounter, I attained the object in view. I must confess, after my inquiry, I found that Mr. Hudson had spoken the truth, though he forgot to state how it was that the York locomotive stock had attained such a priority of excellence. Certainly this is not owing to the management of Mr. Cabrey. Rather the contrary, I presume, for it was only a few weeks before that he received an increase of ten new and improved engines from the manufactory of Messrs. Stephenson, which might well place a twenty-seven-mile line in the position represented by its able Chairman.

While making mention of Mr. Cabrey, I must give you and the public another instance or two of his obstinacy in doing what is wrong, namely, in persisting to run trains with cheap hands, whereby much property has been destroyed, and life all but sacrificed. On the 17th ultimo, the engine of the goods'-train which leaves Selby between 5 and 6 o'clock A. M., on reaching Saddlethorp, about sixteen miles from Hull, became disabled (no surprise to me). The driver was about to "shunt," to allow the mail-train, which was becoming due, to pass, but by some mismanagement up came another goods'-train drawn by the *Esley* engine, and pitched into the first train, throwing eight waggons off the line, three of which tumbled over the bank into the ditch, scattering the goods in all directions, the collision rendering the *Esley* useless. Again, on Tuesday last, the 3rd instant, another "smash" took place at Taylor's Junction, which nearly proved fatal to a number of passengers. It was caused by the inexperience and incapacity of a man named William Taylor, I dare not call him an engine-driver. This man has been only a night "shed-man" for getting up steam; his experience in driving was obtained from shifting the engines about in the shed. Mr. Cabrey thought he would do for a cheap driver, and put him on as such on Monday, the 2nd instant. His second day's drivership produced the following disaster:—He left Normanton with a train of goods, and on arriving at Taylor's Junction the pointsman refused to allow him to cross the line, because the York mail-train was seen approaching. However, he stopped his engine, and recklessly put it in the back gear, and the latter part of the train was pushed over a pair of self-acting points; when up came the York mail, the enginemen of which had no alternative but to leap for their lives, and leave the train of passengers to run into the goods, breaking the waggons and smashing the engine, and jumbling the passengers fearfully together, though fortunately they all escaped with a few bruises only. It is conduct such as this which I so much condemn, for no better plan can be taken to bring railways into disrepute. If those trains had been in proper and competent hands, these collisions could not have taken place; and hence, I contend, the whole of the destruction of property must be attributed to Mr. Cabrey's management, to say nothing of the frightful jeopardy in which the passengers were placed. Through this occurrence there are three more of the Hull and Selby engines laid on the shelf; and to convince you that I was correct in the remarks I made in my last regarding that stock, I



may observe, that I noticed at York the *Vulcan*, the *Ariel*, and the *Antelope*, all of Gray's patent, and which Mr. Gray left perfect, but which will now require a very heavy repair, for upon examination I found there are two of them with their fire-boxes and tubes burned out. Were it not that you are so much pressed for room, I would give you a detailed estimate of the enormous cost it will take to reinstate them. No such conduct as I have described in this letter, and in my last, ever took place on the Hull and Selby, while under the lengthened management of Mr. Gray. I should be glad to know how Mr. Hudson and Mr. Cabrey make out that the saving of 1s. per day, or even 2s. or 3s., to about a dozen enginemen, can ever redeem the destruction of thousands of pounds worth of property caused by such paltry saving. To me it appears that there is anything rather than a saving, but on the contrary, an immense pecuniary loss. It would seem, however, that Mr. Hudson calculates in this way, that while the country is prosperous, he will always be able to produce from 8 to 10 per cent. dividend, and while he does so the proprietors have no right to pry into particulars. For my own part, I consider such reasoning fallacious. To quote the old proverb—"We should make hay while the sun shines." No country in the world should pay more attention to this adage than England, for it has always been afflicted with a periodical stagnation in trade; and from my experience in such matters, I am inclined to think that the next stagnation is not far distant.\* When it does come, Mr. Hudson will, perhaps, prevent prying minutely into the expenditure by stating that the defalcation has arisen from unforeseen circumstances over which the Directors had no control. Now, this would be so far truth; but still why not always adhere to a well-regulated system of management, which would prevent much destruction of property, the value of which could be kept to assist the depressed dividend in the days of unforeseen calamity? Next half-year the York and North Midland will be taxed with an additional sum for new engines and repairs of about 20,000*l.*, independent of the regular current expenses, which are necessarily always great; and besides the above 20,000*l.*, there will be the extra charge on the goods' department, to make up for the destruction of waggons and payment for the goods destroyed; and the carriage department will suffer in the same degree. Upon the lowest calculation, therefore, the extra charge upon the next six months cannot be less than 30,000*l.* This is a great sum for so short a line, however prosperous it may be; and I maintain it might have been saved by common prudence. All that Mr. Cabrey will be able to show for it will be some 200*l.* or 300*l.* saving in the pay-sheet. I may be answered that he will still have the new stock of engines; but unless a very considerable change come over Mr. Cabrey's proceedings, these engines will, before six months, have become complete wrecks, similar to the half-dozen I have described on the Hull and Selby, within the same short space of time.

You may remember, when the present Locomotive Superintendent, Mr. Jenkins, succeeded Mr. Fenton on the Manchester and Leeds Railway, I told you whence he came, and that I should keep an eye

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\* Marked attention should be paid to this prediction, for assuredly it is verified.

upon his movements. I have done so; and from the course he has pursued, he has given ample evidence that he is not possessed of the qualifications necessary for such a line. It would be endless to go over the whole of his system; I shall confine myself for the present to what I have personally witnessed, which will be quite sufficient to show that I am correct. I cannot help expressing my astonishment that men should have the imprudence to undertake the duties of so important and responsible an office, who are neither practically nor theoretically acquainted with the construction of a locomotive engine. Mr. Jenkins is one of this description. Through his management, he is continually getting rid of the best workmen. In the course of a very short time after they come in contact with him, it is of common occurrence to witness from four to six engine-fitters leaving his employment every week, through his obnoxious treatment. It must be allowed that, to have an engine-shed fully supplied with good workmen is of the first importance for the well-being of that department; and the longer those men can be induced to remain in the same place, so much the better for the interests of the Company. Mr. M'Connell knows the effect of this, as I have in many instances shown; and, by the way, I may mention that, in my next letter, I intend once more to make a few observations on that gentleman's management.

To return to Mr. Jenkins. A few weeks ago he took a pique at an old experienced engineman, who had been on the line from its opening, six years ago, and a very steady man—never having had an accident. Unless he would submit to an unjust and unwarrantable interference in his private affairs (with which neither Mr. Jenkins nor the Company had anything to do), he was told he must leave. The man of course left, and took along with him an unquestionable character as a faithful, steady, and good servant; but, as I remarked in a former letter, these characters, however good, come to be of no value; for such despotism still prevails among these upstart Superintendents, that if a man will not submit to abject tyranny, and gives notice to leave of his own accord, knowing that nothing can be said prejudicial to his character, he excites their displeasure, and they do everything in their power to prevent him from being employed elsewhere. They write to each other not to employ such and such a person. Why give a man a good character in his hand, and immediately turn round and write a false and injurious one behind his back? Can it be possible that such unwarrantable conduct can be sanctioned by the Boards? I cannot bring myself to believe that any Board whatever would countenance it; but I assure you, Sir, Locomotive Superintendents do act thus. Is it right that the public should be deprived of the services of an experienced, steady, and trustworthy driver, because he does not suit the caprice of a Superintendent? How would these Superintendents who endeavour to get higher places like to be so treated by Directors? To rob a man indirectly of his daily bread is much worse than highway robbery. I am of opinion that if they continue to pursue this line of conduct, some of them will drop into the pit they are so busy in digging for others. Now, Sir, contrast the parting with this old servant, and the putting on of another of a very opposite description. The name of the latter is William Williams;

he is brother-in-law to Mr. Jenkins, and forty-five years of age. I shall show you the risk the public is placed in by having such a man as a driver. I have no hesitation in saying that he is as unfit a man as ever was placed upon an engine. In the first place, he never was bred to it in any way whatever; he was a coal-miner, and can have no knowledge of mechanics on which to ground a claim for such a situation, and he is now far too old to begin the occupation. If he had not been the brother-in-law of the Superintendent, he would not have been placed where he now is; and if he had been made to go through the general routine connected with all the duties to make a competent driver, he would have been upwards of fifty years of age before he entered upon such a duty. I shall point out to you how he has conducted himself during his two or three months' practice. He has burned the fire-box and tubes of the *Darlington*, one of Stephenson's engines, and of other engines besides. The burning out of lead-plugs, too, has been frequent; and all this with impunity. If any other man, however experienced, had committed one-quarter as much mischief, he would have been discharged without a character, worthless as even the best of these "characters" are. His system of driving is this:—in order to get on, he resorts to that most dangerous of all expedients, fixing down the safety-valves. I have seen him make his fireman hold down the safety-valve over the cylinder part of the boiler. This being his regular practice, the fireman got alarmed, knowing the great danger he was every minute exposed to of being blown to pieces, and he very properly refused to go with Williams any longer. Mr. Jenkins ordered three other firemen to go out in turn. Their names are Samuel Johnson, Robert Bullock, and Benjamin Wollastoncroft. They also very properly refused to put their lives in such danger; and to enforce obedience, Mr. Jenkins gave the two last-named men notice to leave, with a threat that he would serve all others in the same way who dared refuse to go out with his brother-in-law. Could you have believed that any man, possessed of a particle of common sense, would act thus? I assure you it is the truth. I am not the most timid in railway travelling, but I would not put my foot in a train if I knew that such a man as Williams was to drive, and more particularly if I knew he would fix down the valves. What are the valves constructed for but for safety; and why then allow them to be fixed down? I cannot believe that Captain Hall or the Directors are aware that such reckless and unjustifiable conduct is pursued by their Locomotive Superintendent. I believe that if any one is to blame it is Mr. Hawkshaw, the Resident Engineer, who recommended and sustains Jenkins by his influence. I beg to suggest to Captain Hall to make a rigid inquiry into the management of this department at Manchester before it be too late. I must allow there is a very excellent foreman at Leeds, in the room of Mr. Scott, but he is in the pay of the Midland. If he had more power, he could teach such a man as Mr. Jenkins a useful lesson.

While at Manchester, I learned that Mr. Jenkins is desirous the Directors should allow him to make their own engines. I would seriously recommend them to pause before they invest so expensive and important a trust in such unqualified hands. Nothing but his igno-

rance could make Jenkins attempt such a thing. It is no easy matter now-a-days to turn out an effective locomotive, to sustain the speed required ; it has conquered many a man possessed of far more mechanical skill than Jenkins could ever boast of, although he should live till doomsday.

As usual, I am encroaching too much upon your crowded columns, but I shall be very brief in my promised review of the by-gone year. I shall not recapitulate the very many accidents that have taken place. They have been more numerous for the same given time than at any former period ; but, although such has been the case, I would beg to tell the railway traveller not to be afraid. Many times the press gives a very exaggerated account of a trifling accident, in which no real danger could accrue. I am in most instances acquainted with the particulars, and have never flinched from showing the real cause of a disaster, if I were convinced it proceeded from negligence or mismanagement. The fatal accidents, during the last twelve months, were occasioned entirely from want of a due regard being paid to the use of the signals, or a deficiency in their construction. This I clearly proved was the case at Camden Town, Defford, Leeds, and on the Norfolk line. The last fatal accident on the Dover line was totally unconnected with railway management.

The very numerous collisions have, in the majority of instances, been caused by the employment of incompetent and inexperienced drivers. The greater proportion of them, I have already proved, proceeded from this cause ; and so convinced was I that they would occur if a change did not come over the management, that I frequently predicted almost the very spot where such events would take place. One of them occurred while I was writing the prediction of it, another three days after, and a third the following week.

Under present circumstances, it would be a perfect farce to call the attention of the Board of Trade to these matters. General Pasley, who is the mouth-piece of that body, in his long letter to the daily *Times*, stated that he seldom read the numerous railway papers on railway subjects, having better opportunities of judging of points connected with his own official duties than the Editors or correspondents of these journals. What the opinions of Editors or other correspondents may be as to his "opportunities" and "official" duties, I know not ; but so far as I am concerned, I must say that nothing appears more plain to me than that the General does not know what his duties are, for in whatever inquiry into a railway accident he has taken a prominent part, I have always shown that I was much better acquainted with the whole matter in detail than he ; and I can assure him that he will find much more information from the correspondents of railway papers than he can ever arrive at otherwise. With all his "official capacity," he has not the knowledge nor the proper method of arriving at the *whole* of the truth of an important circumstance. He has never let the public know the extent of his "official duties." The only duty that I remember his having actively busied himself in was the stage-coach affair at Nine Elms station, to which he paid many a visit, and respecting which he wrote many a letter ; till at last the Directors all but told

him to mind his own business, and they would attend to theirs. General Pasley and the Board of Trade never took one-hundredth part of the trouble about a fatal accident that they took with this paltry coach-job. At all events, whatever they have done, they have kept it from the public; and if they have done anything, no attention has been paid to it; for, as to safety, I must repeat what I said last year, "we just remain as we were."

I would appeal to Government whether the time has not now arrived when we should take a lesson from the disasters of 1845 to improve the railway management of 1846. From their by-gone apathy, I cannot venture to predict that the Government will interfere this Session; but sure I am, that if they do not, and that speedily, Coroners' inquests will be very frequent. No one can tell at present if Government even meditate insisting on an improvement. They surely see difficulties in the way that scare them; I have never seen any difficulty, neither can I conceive one. I am sure I have exposed a sufficient number of railway delinquencies to satisfy even General Pasley that the time has now come for the consideration of this important subject in Parliament. Mischief is continually being done, and prevention should therefore be immediate. Railways do not often produce men of first-rate talents, and very few of even second-rate abilities; and never will they do so under the present system, because the requisites have always been influence and patronage. Men properly educated to fulfil the important functions of railway administration have never been inquired after.

Railway Superintendents may ascribe to me vituperation and bad feeling. I deny all such feeling. My denunciations spring from an ardent wish for greater safety in railway travelling. I feel confident it can be obtained by very simple means being adopted by Government, and at a small cost to the public, and without in the least degree interfering with the general arrangements of any Company.

We know there is such a thing as men forgetting the extent of the regulations laid down to guide them; and I must say that a very large trust is reposed in the discretion of Railway Superintendents and their assistants. The present system looks desperate, but I hope some happy change will take place. It really is a daily affliction to see how the locomotive and permanent way departments are at present governed. It shall not be my fault if a better order of things is not introduced.

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#### LETTER XLIV.

*To the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart., First Lord of the Treasury, &c. &c.*

Birmingham, February 25, 1846.

SIR,—It may be considered a bold step to take upon myself to address one who stands so pre-eminently high in the British empire, and whose talents and comprehensive mind are universally acknowledged; but the subject to which I wish to call your attention appears to me to have been hitherto overlooked amongst the multitudinous duties your present position entails upon you. The subject is of the first import-

ance, being that of Railway Locomotive Management—a department which has not been duly considered by Railway Directors, and completely mismanaged by those who have been appointed as Superintendents—in truth, which has been neglected less or more by every establishment of that description in the kingdom.

At the cutting of the first sod of the Trent Valley Railway, you, in your address to the Directors of the line, specially called their attention to the importance of the regularity of the trains, and very judiciously recommended that every attention should be paid to the comfort of the third-class passengers. This was so far good; but you apparently forgot the most important of all considerations to be impressed upon the minds of the Directors, namely, SAFETY. What would it avail to a first-class passenger that the carriages were fitted up with all the elegance that Royalty can command; or to a third-class passenger, if the carriages were lined with down, if, in the course of the journey, he were in constant fear of being hurled into eternity? A “wet jacket,” with an assurance of absolute safety, would be far more esteemed by the travelling public than all the elegance and comfort alluded to. But, Sir, why should not comfort and safety be combined? The supply of the additional comfort you recommend will be attended with a little extra expense, but an improved management in the locomotive department would be attended with no additional cost whatever, nay, there would be an absolute saving. The first point to be attained would be a selection of intelligent and well-educated Superintendents; and then, and in consequence, would follow a judicious appointment of engine-drivers, as in the instance of the careful appointment of river and coast pilots. Important as the latter body of men are, I consider that with locomotive enginemen the responsibility is much greater; for every hour in the day the lives of thousands of thousands of individuals are placed under their care. Of late, the selection of these men has been, and still is, notoriously defective. A better arrangement in this respect is a consummation much to be desired; and its attainment would ensure a great pecuniary saving to Railway Companies, while loss of life would become a peradventure, though, under the present system, it is almost of necessity.

You must be aware, Sir, that there are two foundations on which all railways, to be effective, should be constructed. The fact is, that due regard should be paid to the requirements of the country through which they are to pass, including among other things a reasonable probability of a satisfactory return for the capital invested; and this consideration invariably calls forth the attention of the Senate. The second is of much more importance, because the public generally are interested, namely, that regulations should be laid down to ensure perfect safety to the traveller; and the Senate has never yet given this subject one particle of consideration. If the former foundation should unfortunately be built upon a quicksand, and the concern should fail in a pecuniary point of view, the result can affect only a few, who may have unfortunately invested their capital in a scheme which had not been properly digested. The consequence may be that the whole of the capital is lost; but then, great as that evil would be, and however disastrous to many families,

still there is a probability that this capital might, by other means, be replaced. Not so, however, with the latter; for, if from disregard of safety, human life should be lost, it can never be restored, nor can all the pecuniary assistance that the Directors may bestow upon the bereaved be an adequate compensation for the loss of an endeared relative or friend.

It is to the prevention of such calamities that I desire to call your special attention, so that a remedy may be provided. In the last Session of Parliament you appeared to be aware that a necessity existed for interference, for you stated in the House of Commons that, if Directors and Superintendents neglected to adopt a better system that would guarantee greater safety to the public on railways, the Government would interfere.

This threat, Sir, like all former and similar threats given by the Board of Trade, has produced no good whatever. You cannot but see that railway accidents have increased to an alarming extent since you made the declaration referred to. It would be waste of time to enumerate them, but they cannot fail to alarm the traveller; and the more so, as the daily and provincial press often exaggerate minor accidents, and the public are aware of the apathy of Government in this important particular. Unfortunately, perhaps, there is now no other mode of travelling; and hence it matters not however timid the public may be, and however uncertain of attaining their journey's end, travel they must by railway at whatever risk, or not travel at all.

If, Sir, there were no remedy, it would be some consolation to hear or read the sophistry of Railway Directors. Many of them have great talents for the conducting of such important business; but weigh them in the balance and you will find them wanting upon the particular subject to which I am desirous of arresting your attention. You must not look upon Railway Boards with a blind admiration. Directors often make promises—even written ones to the Board of Trade—but they as often violate, and always more or less evade, them. You ought not to allow things to go on as they are, until we get into irremediable difficulty. This condition of affairs is fast approaching if not checked. There is a remedy, and a very simple one, which I submitted upwards of two years ago, but which I forbear repeating at present. Sophistry gives no reason why we should not at least endeavour to mitigate the evils that do exist when the remedy lies in our power. In your power it does lie, and to adopt it would satisfy the minds of the public, and thus considerably add to the pecuniary resources of all the railway Companies in the kingdom. The only difficulty I see to encounter is, that most railway Boards consider themselves infallible; and to convict them of this error is the main point to be got over, and to induce them to lend an ear to sound advice from those who have real and practical experience.

I trust, Sir, I have sufficiently shown that your interference has now become absolutely necessary, and it is to be hoped that you will not allow this Session to pass without doing *something*. At the same time, while I am advocating Government interference in matters of safety and comfort, I am opposed to Government control over the pecuniary interests of the Companies. My desire is that the present Inspectorship of

Railways should undergo a complete revision, and that all the defalcations observed under that revision should be laid before the Board of Trade, and that that Board should be invested with sufficient power to make their orders at once complied with.

I shall take the liberty of addressing you again, and support my argument with a statistical account of the appointment of Locomotive Superintendents and engine-drivers, by which you will at once perceive that there is much more necessity for your interference than perhaps you may at present be aware of.

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### LETTER XLV.

Birmingham, September, 1846.

THERE is a maxim, that truth is met with smiles; but this does not always hold true. With regard to myself, for example, many of the "truths" I set forth are met with the spirit of revenge; and the manner in which that revenge is exhibited only establishes the more that I am correct.\*

Although months have elapsed since I last wrote in your journal, I have not, in the interim, been inattentive to locomotive management. My last letter I addressed to Sir Robert Peel, calling his attention to this important subject, and concluded it with the intention of addressing him again; but Sir Robert having got so completely engaged with the weightier matters of the State, which engrossed the whole attention of the legislature, I delayed from week to week, until he threw up the reins of Government.

A circumstance has since occurred that makes me feel assured something will be done in furtherance of the object I have so long laboured to accomplish,—I refer to the withdrawal of all railway matters from the Board of Trade, and the placing of them in the hands of five Commissioners. I hope that the new tribunal will be invested with sufficient powers to enable them to carry out forthwith what they may deem proper for the more perfect safety of the railway traveller.

It has ever been an acknowledged fact that the Railway Department of the Board of Trade was nothing more than a piece of dignified flummery, wasting time and money by sending forth recommendations never acted upon, and, when acted upon, quite useless; and receiving assurances that were intended, when occasion required, to be broken or evaded.

When Lord John Russell brought forward his proposition for the new Railway Board, he said it would not be until next Session that full powers would be given them; but that they would, in the meantime, be invested with more powers than the Board of Trade had possessed. I hope that among the limited powers they are at present to wield, they will have the power of improving railway inspection, and of putting it

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\* I made this preface because my life was threatened twice by two parties whom I had exposed. I believe the consequences alone deterred them.



upon a better and sounder principle ; for, as I have times out of number shown, hitherto there has been nothing in it but a name.

It is with pleasure I remark, that fatal railway accidents, caused by actual mismanagement, have been fewer for the last six months than at any former period. This must be satisfactory to the public. Nevertheless, General Pasley, and the staff he was formerly connected with, deserve no praise ; nor have the majority of railway managements any claim to the merit of this lucky circumstance. Generally, locomotive management remains just as defective as ever. The little improvement that has been effected is in no small degree to be attributed to the aid of your journal, in bringing facts before the public, the supreme court of appeal in all matters, though its decrees are often not executed for years ; as for instance, in the cases of the Reform Bill and the Corn Law, though what the public decide upon is sure at last to be done. General Pasley, I regret to say, however amiable individually, is utterly contemptible and worthless as a Government Inspector. He is without qualities, either shining or solid. It is anything but pleasant to think that the destinies of railway travelling and the vital principle of Government inspection, should be placed in the hands of such a man, instead of in the control of the intelligent and the experienced in such matters.

I trust that Mr. Strutt, the President of the Railway Commission, will turn his active mind to this important subject. It is of much greater importance than guarding against scrip forgeries or fraudulent prospectuses. The improvement will not render necessary any additional expense. The same Inspectorship staff would be quite sufficient, upon another principle, and vested in other hands. When a fatal accident occurs, the cry is that a Government Inspector is to be sent down to investigate the cause. What an investigation ! When the General or a military assistant goes down into the country for such a purpose, the Directors and principal officials are those from whom he receives all the particulars of the disaster. If they inform him that the cause is enveloped in mystery, the General rests contented, and frames his Report accordingly. I have repeatedly shown the fallacy of his opinions, and as frequently pointed out that, if the Government inspection had been properly conducted, the majority of those fatal accidents would not have taken place.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Strutt will remedy all this. The method is simple ; but the duties of the Inspectors will be more active and arduous. Their offices must not be kept up as sinecures. If we look back at all the by-gone disasters under the General's inspection, fatal and otherwise, we shall observe evidences of the most flagrant mismanagement that it is possible to conceive. Surely, time, which alters all things, should not keep us everlastingly on the verge of uncertainty in railway travelling ; surely, the stream of improvement should bring forward, if not perfection, at least an amendment.

The Vice-President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gibson), stated in Parliament, that although the Board of Trade had no legal power to enforce regulations on Railway Companies, yet they invariably found that all intimations they had made respecting the safety of the passenger had been readily attended to. Thus they exercised a moral power over

Railway Companies. I flatter myself I know the general working of the railways much better than the Vice, otherwise he would not have made so palpable an error, as to the "moral power." I can assure you, Sir, no permanent attention was ever paid to the Board's "moral power" by any Railway Board, farther than suited their own purpose at the moment. For instance, after the premature and lamentable change resorted to by Mr. Hudson on the Midland Railway, General Pasley was sent down to make inquiry into the efficiency of the new engine-drivers. He heard the Directors' story, and made his Report, that the whole staff was quite effective, and this in the very face of daily mishaps and fatal collisions, which are upon record, and can be referred to. The Board of Trade then saw that there was something wrong, and issued several circulars to all Railway Directions, recommending a careful selection of engine-drivers. In the majority of instances, answers were returned that the recommendation would be attended to. But it was *not* attended to; for every Company in England, in the very face of their promises, continued to pursue the evil course which caused the destruction of much life and property, and the majority of them continue to do so at the present day, to the jeopardising of the public. Foreigners are benefiting themselves through the paltry parsimony of Boards of Direction in this country. The latter, in truth, "step at straws, and leap over bundles," as the sequel of this letter will show. After the Nottingham "manslaughter," and the fatal affair at Camden Town, other recommendations were sent out regarding extra speed. The principal Railway Boards then made a flourish by remodelling their regulations for enginemmen, especially bearing upon that particular point. On no account whatever was lost time to be made up. In the very face of their own *law*, if a train arrive late at any of the principal stations, what does the foreman say to the engine-driver? "You are so many minutes behind time; you must make it up at all hazards." Here the engine-driver is put in great difficulty. If he refuses to do the will of a blustering "petty" Superintendent he is reported as being insolent, and fined from 5*s.* to 10*s.*, according to the tenor of the Report, whether true or false; and this tyrannical conduct is covered by the Superintendent-in-Chief saying, that he must have his Superintendents obeyed, and that it is necessary to keep up subordination. I agree that this is necessary; but certainly there is a method of commanding obedience without hurting the feelings of a subordinate, and having recourse to such language as I have heard used at Exeter, Swindon, and Wolverton. I have repeatedly complained of this before. The conduct pursued by these upstarts naturally causes the men to be angry with their superiors, instead of being sorry for the fault, if they have committed one. To return to the breaking of the *law* of making up lost time, if the engine-driver be foolish enough to follow the order of his headstrong superior, and do run the train to the utmost speed the engine can attain, and no mishap takes place, he is then flattered and encouraged for breaking the *law* laid down for the purpose of ensuring safety. On the other hand, while running at this extra speed should a fatal accident occur, no matter from what cause, the driver and stoker are first seized upon; the master who encouraged the man backs out, and throws the printed

regulations in his face, and asks him boldly, how he dared to break through the printed rules? The Directors and Superintendents know all this, and wink at it. I remember hearing of Captain Huish having given a similar order in the presence of some Directors. Here was an example from a Superintendent, who now ranks himself amongst the greatest officials in the kingdom, since he has become the responsible Manager of the *Great* London and North-Western. His capabilities for such a situation I question very much. He seems to be an enemy to all solid improvement; his head is stuffed with all possible vagaries. If the Captain would but take a lesson from the forbearance and prudence exhibited by the joint Secretaries, he might expect to secure the *fame* these gentlemen have acquired.

The majority of Locomotive Superintendents, and particularly the "petty," have no more care for the property of their employers, or the lives of the public, than if they had nothing to answer for. New and extraordinary appointments have lately taken place. Some of them are already allowing pride to get the better of their prudence; but I shall keep a watchful eye upon them. There is no effort made to inspire confidence in railway travelling but by Chairmen's sophistry at half-yearly meetings, of which Mr. Hudson's is the most prominent. That gentleman, at the half-yearly meeting of the Eastern Counties' Company, affirmed what was not correct, as I shall presently show. Before I enter upon this, however, I must express my opinion, that though Mr. Hudson has been lucky and fortunate, as he himself stated, in adding to his private fortune by his connection with railways, and in the majority of instances has similarly benefitted the Companies, still he has been rash and precipitate. His first attempt was at Derby; and many will remember with regret his North Midland affair. His ambition has been continually fanned by unbounded flattery. But although I admit that he is a man of talent, and adapted to discharge the duties of a Railway Chairman in a financial point of view, still the aptitude which he exhibits is no reason why he should arrogate to himself that he is the best man in the realm to conduct the locomotive establishments thereof. In no one instance, on any line with which he is connected, have these departments been conducted with prudence. The contrary is the fact. Mr. Hudson's previous habits are not adequate to cope with the difficulties that surround so important a department.

Mr. Hudson, at the Eastern Counties' meeting, grievously complained that it was asserted in the House of Commons, that the management of the Eastern Counties' Railway was the worst in the kingdom. He seemed also to think that the public had no right to complain if he and his colleagues were satisfied with themselves. He appeared to flatter himself that he could satisfy the assembly by holding out to them the prospect that he would make it a 9 per cent. line; as if, in respect of a line paying 9 or 10 per cent., the public could afford to lose a life or two occasionally! Now, Sir, I am prepared to confirm Colonel Peel's assertion in the House of Commons, and more particularly previous to the appointment of Mr. Craven to the locomotive department at Stratford. Can Mr. Hudson inform me how it was that all the new engines which were brought upon the line at the time I refer to became so soon

disabled? The truth is, that men were appointed to drive who were incapable, as I pointed out in a former letter. No copy of the regulations was given to many of them, nor even was the trouble taken to read these regulations for their guidance! Can *this* be called good management? Was the advancement of Mr. Scott to the Chief Superintendentship of the Eastern Counties' Company 'good directorship? His education and previous habits do not fit him for such a situation; and the many complaints that passengers have made public, sufficiently prove this. It is a mistake of Mr. Hudson's that he will not engage a man of talent to be where he has the absolute control. You may recollect what laboured influence he had to bring forward, and to what pecuniary sacrifice he had to submit, to get rid of the very valuable services of Mr. Kearsley. Talent, in Mr. Hudson's eye, seems quite a secondary consideration. At the same time, I must allow that the encomium passed by Mr. Hudson upon Mr. Craven, at a former meeting, was merited, for that gentleman gave many proofs of his ability on the Manchester and Leeds Railway; and if he be not hampered and interfered with, there are few men who can perform the duties of the locomotive shed better.

Mr. Hudson denied that he had reduced the staff of the Companies he was connected with, and cited, in illustration, that on the York and North Midland Railway, the first with which he had had the honour of being connected, and which had been in operation for seven years, every engine-driver whom they had at the first, they had now. This assertion is not true. There are from thirty to thirty-five engine-drivers on the York and North Midland, and only two of that number were on the line at its opening. Many a good hand was compelled to leave, and many an inexperienced driver was put on, by Mr. Cabrey, Mr. Hudson's locomotive "pet." His present staff is not effective, and the rate of wages he gives will sufficiently account for this. There are only six or seven who receive 6*s.* 6*d.* per day, the others ranging from 4*s.* to 6*s.* No one who understands the nature of the occupation will say that a four shilling driver can be an experienced man; and before I conclude, I shall have occasion to prove this point strongly. It is true that the York and North Midland has been lucky with regard to the absence of fatal accidents, but no thanks to the management; for many a time have the guards quaked with fear at hair-breadth escapes, exclaiming, "We shall be sure to have a 'flare-up' some day!"

Another instance of Mr. Hudson's management will be found on the Hull and Selby Railway. You have had several correspondents, residing on the spot, informing you of the acquirements of the Locomotive Superintendents under Mr. Cabrey, and representing them in no very favourable light. Since Mr. Hudson has held the reins of government on this line, every "old-established" man has left. Under Mr. Gray, the line kept its whole effective staff from the commencement, but not so now. There are nine or ten drivers, three of whom receive 6*s.* 6*d.*, the others from 5*s.* to 6*s.*

I shall just take a brief retrospective view of Mr. Hudson's management on the Midland, and of the humanity on which he so fluently compliments himself. Did he change the system after the Barnsley

death? No! What mischief did his parsimony cause by reducing the staff of watchmen at Clay Cross tunnel?—the death of a fellow-creature and a great destruction of property. Did he alter the system of appointing unqualified engine-drivers and their Superintendents, after the killing and maiming of the passengers of the special-train on the North Midland? No! He said experience would make good men of the drivers. Did the Nottingham manslaughter, or the Board of Trade's "moral recommendations," cause him to change his questionable management? No! Moreover, from what I can gather from his late speech, not all the catastrophes on the Eastern Counties' line are to have the effect of producing a salutary change! Such is a sketch of Mr. Hudson's vaunted anxiety for the safety of the public, to say nothing of the extra charge he inflicts upon the public to make up his 9 and 10 per cents. It would appear as if he thought the regrets of Directors and officials for a fatal accident, publicly expressed by the Chairman, quite sufficient to satisfy the public, without any amendment of system being resorted to. He must be taught not only to think, but to act otherwise.

You will remember that, in a previous letter, I brought forward much complaint against Mr. Jenkins's management on the Manchester and Leeds Railway; and since then my allegations against him have been supported by another correspondent of yours. Having occasion to be in Manchester a few weeks ago, I made it my business to ascertain the course of conduct he was still pursuing, more particularly since Mr. Craven's advancement to the Eastern Counties'. I found that he makes no amendment whatever; on the contrary, since Mr. Craven left, the locomotive shed has got into a deplorable condition. I formerly mentioned that it was difficult to get proper fitters to remain under Mr. Jenkins, with all the persuasion of Mr. Craven. I can assure you, Sir, when I was there, there was scarcely an engine at the Manchester end of the line capable of being sent out with a train in safety. No confidence can be placed in them that they will reach their destination; nor does it seem that either master or man is capable of putting an engine into an effective state. When Mr. Craven left, all the best hands followed him; they would not remain under Mr. Jenkins, who is no workman, or a judge of work. He has laid down his locomotive management upon the *Cabreyian* principle. He has substituted for those of eight or ten years' standing in their occupation, men to be drivers without one particle of knowledge or experience. I shall describe them, to convince you of the extent of the evil, but shall for the present forbear from mentioning their names publicly:—

1. A washer out of engines, and packer of glands in the shed.
2. Ditto.
3. An engine cleaner.
4. Ditto.
5. A night gaffer over the cleaners.
6. A fitter, tried twice before, and twice stopped from incapacity.

Four of the above were never firemen; they are all four-and-sixpenny men!

7. A fitter, without one particle of experience even as fireman.
8. A ditto ditto.

From this statement, the truth of which I can vouch for, can it be wondered that so much destruction of machinery exists on this line? It will continue to be so while Mr. Jenkins remains at the head, and pursues the same course. I feel assured that, even should no interference be made, the system will cure itself, though, I fear, not without lamentable consequences; and disconsolate relatives will be consoled with in fine speeches from the Directors and officials sentimentalising over the mortal remains of the unfortunate.

I had intended to go over the last six months *mismanagement* of Mr. Cudworth, on the Dover line, and pointed out the cause of such a "sweep" of his old experienced engine-drivers having taken place, as noticed in your columns at the time. There were more left than the number you stated. The reason of my not carrying out this intention is, that the able Chairman of that line has paid a visit to New Cross, and expostulated with Mr. Cudworth upon his imprudence, and caused him to resort to the system of management of his worthy predecessor, Mr. Benjamin Cubitt. It affords me pleasure that Mr. M'Gregor has saved me the trouble of going into detail of Mr. Cudworth's northern peculiarities; it would have done him little credit, and far less credit to that great Company. If he *should* return to his former habits, he may rest assured that I shall not be "backward in coming forward." It would be for the benefit of many Companies if other Chairmen were to take a lesson from the Chairman of the South-Eastern. It would cost them nothing, and much benefit must accrue.

I must postpone some intended remarks upon the Great Western Railway until a future letter, as I have already trespassed so much upon your columns; but I cannot forbear noticing the conduct pursued by the foreman, Mr. Appleby, at Swindon. Is it possible that the Directors, or Mr. Gooch, can authorise him to shut up the waiting-room of the enginemen just as the whim suits him, that when the enginemen arrive at night, drenched with wet, they are compelled to resort to a public-house to get their clothes dried. What was the waiting-room erected for? Certainly for the comfort of the men; and why then should they be deprived of it? Does Mr. Appleby mean to encourage sobriety? I think not. If the men decline going to the beer-shop, they must stand about in their wet clothes, and return home in the same state, to the injury of their constitutions. Surely they are sufficiently exposed to the weather in the performance of their duty, without being subjected to such uncalled-for treatment. In passing, I would also wish to give the *gentlemanly* sub-Superintendent at Exeter a little advice—to pay more attention to his duties than to regattas, and other sports. If I had space, I would enter particularly into his management. Even with the assistance of a man, paid extra to keep him right, he is very defective. While I am referring to the Great Western, I cannot omit noticing, with regret, the retirement of Mr. L. S. Demay, from the Deputy-Superintendentship at Paddington. A more vigilant, attentive, and effective officer is not to be found on any railway. Few are possessed of so much of the suavity of manner so peculiarly adapted for such a situation. The respect which has been shown him by his equals and inferiors cannot but make Mr. Seymour Clarke feel that he

must have been in error, to have caused his retirement. It is to be hoped that Mr. Demay's indefatigable exertions will be more appreciated on some other line.

Though I have been denouncing Managements, allow me to congratulate the proprietors of the Great Southern and Western Railway of Ireland, and the public, upon the judicious selection of the Locomotive Superintendent of that line, Mr. Deurance, a gentleman who so long distinguished himself under Mr. Wood, on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. The care he has taken in the selection of his drivers, clearly proves that he is no advocate of the modern "system," which I have been illustrating. He is, I understand, making arrangements to prevent the possibility of his men being tempted to go abroad with the offer of 10s. per day. Some of our greatest lines have suffered, and are suffering, by this temptation. If Mr. Deurance had considered a four shillings or four shillings and sixpenny-man quite competent to take such an important charge, he would have chosen him; his experience, however, teaches him better, and his employers will be the gainers. He is determined, I am told, that when the line is opened throughout, and all his arrangements completed, with engines of his own manufacture, no locomotive establishment in Europe shall surpass his in point of safety, regularity, and expedition. I verily believe his intentions will be realised.

In my next letter, I shall bring the present position of that important body of men, the guards, under review, and notice the grumbling of great heads—as if there were any difficulty in devising how they should get rid of the great disparity, ill-treatment, and neglect that have long existed, and which the recent amalgamations have brought to light. I shall also bring under the notice of the Railway Commissions and Boards of Direction the existing state of the permanent ways; show that the cheapest contracts are in the best condition; and point out how Companies are taken advantage of with their own money.

After my long silence, I ought to take notice of several other lines; but they must stand over for the present. I must conclude by briefly remarking, that foreigners are reaping benefit from the defectiveness of our locomotive system.

Before the opening of a French line, the Directors call their Locomotive Engineer before them, and impress upon him the importance of engaging engine-drivers of long standing and experience; for on no account will they allow a driver to have the charge of an engine, who does not understand the duties thoroughly. Our English Directors seem never to give this important matter the smallest consideration until it is too late; and even then they only make a promise, to be broken so soon as a catastrophe is forgotten. I know there are upwards of fifty old experienced drivers who left England this season, besides others I do not know of; and, what renders the evil worse is, that they generally go in a batch, and leave on a sudden. The consequence is, that their places must be filled up by inexperienced hands. Thus, you will observe, we have been all along making experienced engine-drivers for the benefit of the French. Our Locomotive Superintendents are suffering severely by this emigration; for, at the opening of an English line, they cannot

get experienced hands, though there is no difficulty to find them to go abroad. This, of itself, proves there must be something wrong in our system.

I have already dilated upon our Government inspection; I shall compare it in a single point or two with the French. If the French Inspector know of an incompetent engine-driver, he can order him off the engine at once; if he should see the machinery of an engine defective, no matter on what part of the line, he can order it to a siding, wrap a cord round the spoke of the wheel and frame, and put his seal of authority upon it, and the Company dare not with that engine run a train again until repaired and re-examined by the Government authority. I shall return to this subject.

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### LETTER XLVI.

Birmingham, December 24, 1846.

I HAVE no doubt many of your readers have been expecting that I would follow up my promised remarks, but various circumstances have made me defer them. Several strictures, of a very important nature, must also stand over for a short time; and for this reason, that the reports I have received are of so startling a nature, that I must make further inquiries. If all be true, the facts must call forth the indignation not only of the new Railway Board, but of every shareholder and railway traveller. Business has prevented me from taking my annual tour over the principal lines at the usual time; but I am at present making arrangements which, I hope, will enable me to institute personal inquiries respecting the truth of what I have hinted at. You, Sir, have long been aware that I never bring forward an accusation against any management or public servant until I am fully satisfied that it is true. I have never been a mere visionary theorist, or a mere declamatory writer for the sake of writing (as Mr. Hudson was pleased, in one of his speeches, to designate all railway writers); my remarks are based on existing facts, showing that an immense amount of "corruption" does exist in our locomotive establishments and Government inspections.

The *Spectator* recently, in a paragraph which you quoted, gave a very significant hint, showing how General Pasley was hoodwinked. Something of the same sort must have taken place when the "Coffin" tunnel of the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway was inspected. That line should not have been opened when it was. You may remember that I publicly explained the great danger of passengers in being conveyed through that tunnel, stating that the roof, never having been completed, was continually falling in; and this exposure caused a re-inspection by the General, when workmen were immediately put on to complete it. You may also remember that a passenger nearly lost his life through a quantity of loose rock falling from the roof of the tunnel upon him while the train was passing. Let Government inspection be substantial and real—not imaginary—now that General Pasley has resigned; and then Directors and Superintendents will tremble!



The apathy of our Government is a disgrace to the country, in allowing such a system to be persevered in, tending as it does to engender want of confidence in this noble mode of transit. Let but the new Commission carry out such a general and constant inspection as I suggested upwards of three years ago, and it would soon appear that a mishap would be a peradventure proceeding from incapacity and ignorance. I advocate no financial interference or unnecessary dictation ; what I wish to see is a truly substantial and effective set of qualified enginemen. It is passing strange that this class of servants of the public, who have so much human life and property committed to their charge, should be so overlooked by the Government, in the face of all that has been written—in the face, too, of life sacrificed and property destroyed, through glaring incapacity and negligence. River and coast pilots pass through an ordeal, and now we have a Government Commission to inquire into the qualifications of ship captains and mates in the merchant service ; and yet, Sir, put all these different and important classes of men together, and you will find that, in the whole course of one year, they have not one-tithe of the responsibility of human life under their charge that locomotive enginemen have in one month. The true cause of this oversight, or rather wilful blindness, it is easy to discover. It is the curse of this country—"Parliamentary influence." It certainly would appear as if no sacrifice of human life, however great, were considered too much to sustain this evil. It is to be hoped, however, that Mr. Strutt will make a radical change, and that speedily ; and I trust it is true that he has measures on foot for such a purpose. I would earnestly warn the Commission to beware of all sophistical reasoning and perverted facts brought forward by Boards of Direction and Superintendents.

Let me call your readers' attention to the way in which the French Government cares for the public safety, and to the apathy of ours. In doing so, I beg them to bear in mind that I do not wish that our inspection should be on the same principle as that of the French ; which latter is by far too complicated and expensive. My object, for the present, is merely to draw a comparison ; in a future letter I purpose to analyse the French system, and point out its advantages and defects.

1st. In the making of a locomotive engine in France, a Government officer proves whether the boiler and cylinders are capable of bearing the requisite pressure ; if sufficient, the officer puts on the Government stamp, with the amount of pressure allowed. In this country, boilers are made without any proving, and of whatever strength the maker may choose ; hence the loss of life and hair-breadth escapes from boiler-explosions, to say nothing of many minor burstings which have never reached the public ear.

2nd. In France all the spring balances are similarly proved and stamped. With us they may put on any sort of balance they choose, new or old ; and, moreover, incompetent drivers are allowed to "over-weight" them, and when this does not suit, the drivers tie them down. Although this dangerous practice is well known, and has frequently been exposed by me, it is allowed to continue.

3rd. When a new engine is put on a French line, and before it is

allowed to take a passenger-train, the Government Inspector goes upon the foot-plate, runs the engine a certain distance, puts on the full amount of pressure stamped upon it, and then gives in his report as to its effectiveness, so far as it is possible to judge of this; and Government can inflict a penalty if an engine be used without first being officially proved. In this country, a Locomotive Superintendent-in-Chief can put on what sort of engine he likes, of whatever make, old or new, he being responsible for nothing.

4th. The Government inspection of France is particularly directed to the proving of the wheels and axles of engines, carriages, and waggons; and, as I mentioned in my last, if a Government officer sees any of these defective, or has just reason to believe that they are so, he has power to detain that engine on the spot. It is notorious that with us, in consequence of there being no pecuniary or personal responsibility demanded by Government, our Superintendents, and the "petties" in particular, are exceedingly careless as to this important part of the machinery of the train. At this present moment, I know of two engines running with their wheel-tires loose; and in my experience I have known a Locomotive Superintendent run an engine sixty miles with a cracked axle. The excuse usually given is, that they are deficient of stock, and cannot avoid it. In such cases as these, if life should be lost, an English Superintendent would go scathless; in Scotland, he would be severely punished, as in the case of Superintendent Paton and his engineman; in France, after the circumstance is known, the public run no possible risk. According to our authoritative system, the locomotive establishments laugh at suggestions, and dare any one to interfere.

5th. While a French line is in the course of construction, it is continually under the watchful eye of the Government officials, and every inch is examined, particularly the tunnels and bridges. In England, they may make a line in any way they like, provided only that they can contrive to secure a tolerably comfortable ride over it, and through tunnels, with the Inspector in a close carriage! I have before pointed out a case where four miles had been only temporarily laid, our old Inspector scarcely leaving the line before they commenced taking the rails up again; at another time, riding over a bridge inspecting it, while at the moment it was actually being propped under! The propping remains to this day. As to the inspection of tunnels, I have referred to this above. Do not these facts plainly show that hitherto all our Government parade of inspection has been, and still is, a complete farce? I have not done with this subject; and when I analyse the French mode, I shall at the same time take a more comprehensive view of our own.

You have of late, on several occasions, referred to the proceedings of a Superintendent-in-Chief, on whom is fixed a string of self-appointed titles; they are, the Board, Civil Engineer, Locomotive Engineer, Chief Porter, absolute Emperor, &c. &c.,—I mean Mr. Peter Clarke of the London and Brighton Railway. I will give you an instance or two of his locomotive interference, leaving others of importance, for the reasons stated in the preamble of this letter. It would appear safety is quite a secondary consideration, provided he can carry out his schemes. If the

present Board have deputed their functions to Mr. Peter Clarke, it is high time for the shareholders to bestir themselves, and appoint others who will have some regard for their pockets. Mr. Peter Clarke does not seem to care about any pocket but his own; he has, certainly, in a high degree, the qualification of "feathering his own nest." He gave orders that all the firemen were to have their wages reduced 6*d.* per day, thereby making the pay only 3*s.* 6*d.* This, of course, was a forerunner for the enginemen. In carrying out this, he was unexpectedly foiled, as noticed in your paper the week before last. He has also reduced the quantity of oil to such a degree, that it is impossible for the enginemen to keep the friction parts of the machinery from becoming red-hot; and to cool the parts, they are compelled to steal the oil from the carriage-lamps, and grease from the axle-boxes of the carriages, to get the train to its destination in safety. If Mr. Clarke is remonstrated with by those who know the destruction that inevitably must ensue, his answer is, "he must consider economy." Now, if causing the loss of hundreds of pounds weekly for the saving of a few shillings, be economy, I am at a loss to know what waste is. Can it be a matter of wonder that there have been so many mishaps and hair-breadth escapes of late upon his domain? How Mr. Peter Clarke can have the impudence to supersede Mr. Gray in his duties as Locomotive Superintendent, is above my comprehension, and that of many others; particularly when Mr. Gray has given, through the whole course of his locomotive life, so many evident proofs of his superiority and capabilities as a Locomotive Manager, as well as in the construction of engines, and in keeping them in repair, at a less expense than, perhaps, any other in the kingdom. Nevertheless, an old timber merchant presumes to dictate to a regular practical-bred Engineer of the first eminence! If Mr. Peter Clarke be such an advocate for economy, he should let locomotive matters alone. They are in better hands than ever he can have any pretensions to, although he should govern a railway until doomsday. It was no surprise to me that Mr. Gray should resign. I fear Mr. Peter Clarke will have much cause to regret his interference. If he be determined upon economy, the most prudent step would be to reduce his own exorbitant salary by 500*l.* a-year; the remainder, then, would be by one-half too much for what he is worth. His contemptible interference in locomotive management will assuredly cause every experienced man in that department to leave. Four old enginemen have resolved upon taking this step, for they consider their lives in danger every mile they run. Through these arrangements the line will soon become a perfect picture of the old North Midland, for his promises and talk are all deception. The active part Mr. Peter Clarke took in that ever-memorable affair will redound to his everlasting disgrace. The unjustifiable manner in which he put his poor relatives into responsible situations, for which they were totally unfit, was most flagrant; and he now asserts that Mr. Hudson did it all. It would have been much to the profit of that Company if they had pensioned the whole of them, numerous as they were. What would be the feeling of a number of passengers on board a sailing-vessel, if they heard the crew declare that they considered their lives in danger from the imprudence of the cap-

tain's orders? Would not the passengers immediately raise their voice against him? What difference is there betwixt such a circumstance and the present acts of Mr. Peter Clarke? If a stop be not put to his official career, we shall, before long, have some little aristocratic blood to sprinkle the Brighton rails with; and then the hue and cry will be against the *rail*, and not against the foolish economising schemes of upstart Superintendents, from which nothing but disaster can be expected.

For the eighth time, I am compelled to denounce the verdict of a Coroner's jury. The present case is that of the inquest upon the body of Joseph Allen, engineman, who lost his life from the engine leaving the rails on the Manchester and Bolton Railway. The verdict was:—"That the death was occasioned by the misconduct and recklessness of the deceased driver, by running at an excessive speed." I maintain that there was no evidence produced to warrant such a verdict; neither does it appear that sufficient and proper evidence was brought forward to arrive at the truth. As usual, in such cases, all the testimony had for its object to inculpate the deceased.

By examining the evidence, I shall prove to you that I am correct in my conclusions. The first person called was William Bell (the guard), who stated that, on coming near to Stone Clough, the train was at its greatest speed, which, he considered, was about fifty miles per hour. He gave no positive proof of this being the fact; it was a mere assertion to answer a particular purpose. He did not time the speed of the train, it was only a guess; and, besides, I will defy any man of whatever experience, to arrive at the exact speed in a carriage, without appealing to a time-piece. He again stated that, when the accident occurred, they were running too sharp, which made him look out at the window of the carriage (what business has a guard to be in a carriage?), in order to give the engineman a signal; but both the driver and fireman were looking forward, so that he could not catch their attention. This proved, so far, they both were attending to *their* duty; but this guard must be possessed of very little presence of mind. If he were actually at the moment in terror of his life, to say nothing of the lives of the passengers committed to his charge, which he wishes to infer, why did he not immediately put down his break? This would have at once arrested the attention of the driver to look back, when he would have seen the signal to bring up. Instead, however, of doing this, or resorting to any other stratagem, he sits comfortably down in the carriage again; which, to an unbiassed mind, would infer that he did not feel at the time that danger was so imminent. A juror inquired the utmost speed allowed for express-trains. The guard said, twenty-four miles per hour. Now, who ever heard of twenty-four miles per hour being express speed? Ten years ago this was not considered anything out of the way. But mark what follows; he immediately contradicts himself. He states they are allowed one hour and a quarter to run thirty and a quarter miles, including stoppages. Now, this time gives a rate of thirty miles per hour, which makes six miles difference in his statement. But I defy any man in England to say what is the average speed of express-trains. They run at all speeds, according to circumstances and to *orders*; and if any-

thing happen, the engineman must stand the brunt of the whole. As I mentioned in a former letter, Captain Huish gave orders for an express-train to run the train from Crewe to Liverpool in one hour and twenty minutes, so that the Captain's great experience is quite at variance with the evidence advanced on this occasion.

The second witness called was John Lockton, an engine-driver, who stated that the train passed him, but he could not tell the speed, for it was impossible for him to do so. It never occurred to him there was any danger. If any of the five witnesses was competent to judge of the rate of speed, it was only this witness.

The third witness was George Potter, who gave strange evidence, taking into account that he has been a platelayer on the line from its commencement. In the first place, he said the train passed him two miles from the place of accident, and it was running at a tremendous speed, far greater than ever he saw before; and he concludes by saying that this "tremendous speed" was forty miles per hour! Some fifteen years ago, much weight might have been placed upon such evidence; but now-a-days, every one may see this terrific forty miles speed resorted to hourly.

The fourth witness was Geo. Barnes. His evidence is unimportant, but unaccountably ridiculous. Who ever heard of any one seeing the last carriage of a train a quarter of a mile distant, particularly if in head of it, or of raising a cloud of dust when the ground was hard frozen? Perhaps he did not know steam or fog from dust; but, because he could not see the last carriage a quarter of a mile off, the engineman was running at an unaccountable speed!

The fifth and last witness was Mr. Andrew Izott, Superintendent of the works, a personage whose interest it was to get the deceased blamed, in order to justify himself, and cover his own negligence in allowing the line to be out of repair. He stated, that on the morning of the accident he was on the spot, and saw nothing defective. It was not very likely he would confess so even if he had. He said that two trains had passed that day before the deceased's; but he did not see the latter, though he believed he was running too fast. Upon what fact he founds his belief I cannot conjecture. He, however, goes on to say that it was dangerous to run 40 miles an hour. Strictly speaking, he was right in this, if the dilapidated state of the rails be taken into account; but would he stand up before a dozen railway gentlemen, and ask for a situation similar to that he now has, and, if a question were put, declare that it would be unsafe to run a train at the rate of 40 miles an hour if the line were in the state he represents the Manchester and Bolton to be? Would they give him the situation? Certainly not! How ridiculous for him to observe that, because two trains had previously passed, it was a proof of the line being perfect. It mattered not to the question at issue, although ten trains had passed just ten minutes before. The defective rails must give way some time; but that is no reason why the blame should be so unceremoniously laid to the driver's charge, and particularly when the man was dead, and could not answer the unjust accusation. If any faith is to be placed upon this witness's evidence, in Heaven's name let Government put a stop to all express-trains; but have we not had

scientific individuals nominated by Government, who run on various lines at a speed of 50 miles per hour and upwards, and see no danger in it?

Of the foregoing evidence (and I have given the whole stated relative to the speed), there is not one tittle that can justify the verdict that Allen was running recklessly; and it is allowed by all that he was of exemplary character, and experienced in his occupation. I have taken some pains to ascertain if this be correct, and I have found it is so.

The Coroner seemed to have a desire to favour the Company by bringing forward a trumpety statement, written by the hospital nurse, purporting to be the sentiments of the mangled fireman. Such a bolstered-up document ought not to have been produced to influence the jury. Superintendent Hall was, no doubt, the getter-up of this precious evidence; and this may be gathered from what he stated when he unwarrantably interrupted the first witness (Bell). I do not blame the jury for their verdict, seeing how they were led to it, and, moreover, knowing them to be totally ignorant of the working of a railway; but I would ask why the Coroner did not call for disinterested evidence respecting the actual state of the permanent way. Such evidence could easily have been procured, for it is notorious that this line has been in an imperfect state for a considerable time back; and I am prepared to meet Mr. Izott upon this point. Several of the passengers, after being released from the train, went back to see if they could discover the cause of the disaster. They found a bent rail, much worn and split up. Why was not this rail laid before the jury? The production of it would have led to an important inquiry. And, above all, what became of General Pasley's successor? It was a part of his duty to know in what state the line was; and, indeed, he ought to know the state of all lines, and at all times. I can assure Mr. Strutt that there are several lines at this moment as defective as the Manchester and Bolton. This is one of the subjects I have promised to enter upon by-and-by.

To prove that my assertion of the Manchester and Bolton being defective is correct, let us see what took place near the same fatal spot on the day of the inquest. A passenger-train was thrown off the line, from the defectiveness of the rails. Fortunately for the engineman (otherwise *he* would have been held responsible), the train was running at a slow pace; and it surely must have been a slow pace, when it is sworn that express-trains on this line are only allowed to run at 24 miles per hour—one mile less than the average of luggage-trains on well-kept and well-regulated lines!

What better evidence could be produced in favour of the Atmospheric! Here we have it sworn to by a person who styles himself a scientific general superintendent of railway works, that a speed of 40 miles per hour is dangerous with a locomotive engine; and, on the other hand, we have incontestible practical proof that 60 to 70 miles are obtained with safety on the Atmospheric. The enemies of the Atmospheric will scarcely apply to Mr. Izott for his testimony to support their views.

I cannot but take this opportunity of referring to a very inconsistent Superintendent affair, which took place, some weeks ago, on the Great Western Railway, at Paddington. The propriety or impropriety of the

circumstance that gave rise to it, it is not at present my intention to enter upon. I merely wish to show that whatever law may be laid down by the Directors, the Superintendents presume they have a right to alter it when it suits their own individual purpose. It would appear that it was the invariable practice of Earl Fitzhardinge, when he travelled on the Great Western, to present (unsolicited) the guard with a sovereign; and when he went by a special-train of his own, he gave, in addition to the gratuity to the guard, two sovereigns to the enginemen, and one to the fireman. This, no doubt, was to encourage a strict look out by all parties. A few weeks ago, his Lordship ordered a special-train from Paddington, and acted towards the men employed as above described. Some busy-body having whispered into Mr. Seymour Clarke's ear how handsomely his Lordship always acted, Mr. Clarke next day called the guard, and put the question to him. He honestly and frankly informed him of his Lordship's generosity, when Mr. Clarke immediately demanded of him the sovereign, which was given up. Mr. Clarke at the same time stated that he would lay the circumstance before the Board, and endeavour to get it back again, but he feared he would not be able. What duplicity was this! If Mr. Clarke had had a wish to be really friendly, why did he take any notice of the circumstance? It afterwards turned out, as I am told, that another officer of the Company claimed the sovereign; upon what principle I know not. When Mr. Seymour Clarke demanded the sovereign of the guard, I suppose he forgot the basket of game his Lordship so kindly ordered to be sent to him a few days before. I would ask Mr. Seymour Clarke if he laid his own present of game upon the Directors' table, and respectfully asked them how he was to dispose of Earl Fitzhardinge's gift? Can you, Sir, tell me what difference there is betwixt twenty shillings' worth of game, packed up by Lord Fitzhardinge's gamekeeper, and forwarded, by his order, to a superior railway servant, and twenty shillings' worth of gold, presented to an inferior servant by his Lordship himself? I think they are the same; but if there be any culpability in the matter (I do not think there is much), Mr. Seymour Clarke is the more guilty of the two; for he is a high-salaried servant, placed there to show forth a perfect and pure example, and not to break any law, whereas the other servant had only his one duty to perform, and, moreover, his miserably low pay compels him to accept anything that may be voluntarily presented by the wealthy. It is a well-known fact, that guards generally are miserably paid, and on the Great Western in particular. If you allow for the rents of two homes, and the expense of half the time from home, it is a wonder to me how they can show any appearance of respectability at all in their families. This is a subject I shall have occasion to refer to by-and-by. Mr. Seymour Clarke was, I am told, sadly puzzled how he was to get at the enginemen's sovereigns. Upon reflection, he was compelled to let them keep theirs, for he knew he dared not deal with enginemen as he might do with guards. Men that will suit Mr. Gooch at the present time are not to be met with every day; and, to the credit of Mr. Gooch be it spoken, he is, and ever has been, very particular in the selection of his men. I wish I could say as much of many others, who bring themselves forward with high pretensions.

With reference to runaway engines, and to prevent a recurrence of such dangerous mishaps, I would beg leave to recommend to all Locomotive Superintendents, chief and deputy, although I know it is unpalatable to them even to hint a suggestion, that every engine-driver shall, before leaving his engine, put her out of gear; and, for better security, a plan should be employed that he could also lock the reversing lever. This latter step would prevent much mischief in the sheds, from ignorant men and boys tampering with the engines.

Some weeks back, I observed a suggestion from one of your correspondents respecting a railway superannuated fund. I shall have something to say upon this laudable subject after I have completed certain inquiries regarding the benevolence and magnanimity of the two provident institutions existing on the southern division of the London and North-Western and Great Western Companies.

It appears that declining health has induced Mr. Bury to resign his laborious duties on the London and North-Western Railway; and it is rumoured that Mr. Stephenson will endeavour to put on a gentleman from the North. I would warn the Directors to be careful not to allow any influence, however great, to place their line in jeopardy by one of the Cudworthian stamp. It will require the proved talent, energy, and experience of a Wood, a Kearsley, or a Gray, to cope with the difficulties that surround the locomotive department of the southern division of the London and North-Western, arising from such an immensity of increasing traffic.

Before I conclude, I wish to inform a correspondent who says he is a large shareholder of the London and North-Western Company, that all he has been informed of respecting the shed-management at the Birmingham shed is perfectly true, and that much more could be added; but it would not interest the general reader were I to comply with his request, farther than that I would once more recommend the "photographic" picture-maker to put aside his cap of vanity and put on that of prudence, and to pay more attention to Mr. Johnstone, who placed him there, otherwise he may be the downfall of them both; for he has created more dissension for the few months he has been night-superintendent—as he is pleased to style himself—than has existed from the commencement. My correspondent will find his other queries fully answered by referring to the second volume of the *Railway Record*.

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## LETTER XLVII.

Birmingham, February 10, 1847.

EVENTS begin to thicken, and, unfortunately, to alarm. I believe Directors think they have done their duty; but I fear they will find that much they have done will not, in the end, prove to be wisdom and sound policy, but that, in all probability, it will lead to great destruction of life and property.

The most prominent of these events are, the retirement of Mr. Gray from the locomotive department of the London, Brighton, and South



Coast Railway, and of Mr. Bury from the southern division of the London and North-Western, and the injudicious appointment of their successors.

I shall commence with them in the order of their appointment; and first, of Mr. Thomas Kirtley, late of the old North Midland, whom, at that time, I had much and just cause to condemn. This appointment must plainly prove to the public that the Directors have given up the whole of the working interest of this valuable concern to the hands of Mr. Peter Clarke, who has shown, in a multitude of cases, that he cares for no one's interests but his own. In no way can I account why the Directors should have been so blinded as to listen to his sophistry, or to give their sanction that Mr. T. Kirtley should be the successor of Mr. Gray. To convince, you, Sir, and your readers, that I am just in my condemnation of this appointment, I will state how he has commenced. He has discharged three experienced enginemen and three firemen, under the cloak of reduction. Two of the enginemen had been in the service of the Croydon Company for a period of eight years, and would never have been placed in their present position had it not been for the amalgamation. During the whole period, they gave the utmost satisfaction to their employers, never having been in fault, nor destroyed property to the value of even a lead-plug. Still, Mr. Kirtley must discharge them, under pretence of reducing the staff! This must have been a pretence; for, immediately, he converted four firemen into enginemen, and put on two new hands, because they were cheap; and moreover, he purposes, I have reason to know, to proceed further in this unwise step, to please his patron. Previous to this "manufacture" of firemen into drivers, he did the same. I have not space to enumerate all the mishaps these "snobs" have caused; I shall only mention a few, by way of proof. No. 49 engine had just come out of the shed, having had a thorough repair; but, after running three days, she "burned" so badly, that she now stands in the repairing-shed with half the tubes burned out. No. 13, after undergoing the same repairs, and running for a few days, stands by the side of 49, in a similar condition. No. 21, burned more seriously than the others; the lagging of the boiler burned, and the engine otherwise was completely spoiled. Now, the utmost saving Mr. Kirtley can make, in one week, by the change of hands, is 18s.; and to meet this paltry sum, the destruction these men have caused in one week will amount to upwards of as many hundreds of pounds as he has saved shillings! I expect I shall be able to lay before your readers an estimate of the expense Mr. Kirtley's new hands will cause during the first quarter of his appointment. I shall endeavour to do this, because Mr. Peter Clarke will cover over the iniquity in a mystical locomotive account, such as he so successfully produced while he and his *protégé* had the command of the old North Midland shed.

Would you believe it, Sir, Mr. Thomas Kirtley and his master mean to discharge the whole staff of Mr. Gray, although they have got themselves into interminable difficulty with respect to engines? They are actually at this moment nearly at a stand for effective and safe engines to run the passenger-trains; and yet, in the face of this, Mr. Kirtley

has discharged fifteen boiler-makers and thirty-five fitters; but this is only to make room for others, upon a very questionable principle. In taking on and advancing the views of parties, other qualifications than merit are understood to be in the way; in fact, I have been told that there is a relative of a farmer who has offered 50*l.* (of course not to Mr. Kirtley or Mr. Clarke) to be made an engineman at once. When remonstrated with upon the impropriety of risking his own life and the lives of others, he said, "Oh! never mind *that*; if such should be the case, I shall die easily." In my last I stated that, if the career of Mr. Peter Clarke were not put a stop to, we should soon have some aristocratic blood wherewith to sprinkle the rails. It now appears evident that my prediction has every probability of being unfortunately carried into effect. The public should make some little inquiry into whose hands they are placing their lives. The loss of life, shortly after this line was opened, was caused by the injudicious selection of many of the enginemen—men having been put on who never drove an engine in their lives; and the Directors must be held culpable for allowing the same disgraceful and unwarrantable misconduct to be resumed. I shall attend to the hint you gave me on Mr. Kirtley's appointment; and, I assure you, Sir, I shall not flinch from my duty to the public.

The next appointment is that of Mr. M'Connell—of Gloucester Railway notoriety—as successor to Mr. Bury. Mr. Kirtley's appointment surprised me, but certainly *this* does much more astonish me; and many who are more competent judges than myself, are of the same opinion. I have travelled many hundreds of miles since his appointment, and in no single instance have I heard mention made of it but with astonishment, because it proceeds from a Board who never before committed themselves in any matter to cause alarm to the passenger. Sir, I regret that I am compelled to bring this transaction prominently before the public. I am perfectly convinced that it has not been done upon public grounds, but from some private motive. It cannot have been based on the actual qualifications of Mr. M'Connell, for in no one instance can he show any good he ever did on the Gloucester line; in fact, there is not a Locomotive Superintendent in the kingdom who has wasted more money, or failed more in his attempts at improvement. He followed the Cabreyian principle in reducing the wages of others, and advancing his own, and made a complete "sweep" of competent men, to the tune of many thousands of pounds. The following is the only qualification I ever heard he was possessed of, namely, the knack of pushing himself forward in the company of men of talent, hearing their opinions upon scientific subjects, and advancing them in other quarters as his own. This is no secret. It is often alluded to, just as is the way he plagiarised "Lardner's Essay on the Steam Engine," when he wished to bring himself forward as a lecturer to the Mechanics' Institute at Liverpool; though there the Liverpool mechanics detected him, and exposed him in the room. So, too, with his paper upon a new and improved brake—a brake he palmed upon Captain W. Moorsom as original. This paper was read at the Institution of Civil Engineers, when, at the same time, the "invention" was only a copy of the old "Bolton" brake, when that line was opened. And how Mr. M'Connell has the audacity

to put C.E. to his name, is to me unaccountable; but even this is only a copy from the street-water turncocks, who style themselves the same. The letters C.E. are now as little respected as Esquire is when attached to such names in print, or put on the back of a letter.

The locomotive character of the old London and Birmingham has been sadly depressed for some time, in consequence of very many of the old hands being tempted to go abroad, which might have been averted by the sacrifice of a few pounds. The withholding of this little sacrifice has caused the loss of thousands of pounds, and innumerable dangers and delays. In proof of this, I need only give an extract from a printed circular, dated the 12th January, signed by Mr. Bury, by order of the Directors:—"It is with regret the Directors have occasion to call on the men engaged in the movement of the trains to be more vigilant in their duty, and to recover that character for attention which the men on this line formerly possessed." No circular ever caused me more surprise than this, which called upon the men to recover their old character for attention; while, at the same time, Mr. Bury knew, if the Directors did not know, that out of from 123 to 130 men, he had only twenty men on the line who possessed the character referred to, all the others having been appointed subsequent to the period when this portion of the London and North-Western stood so high in public estimation for its staff of enginemen. The cause of all the mishaps, dangers, and delays, which called forth the Directors' regret, was the appointment of many boys and incompetent men, falsely represented by the petty Superintendents, and carried out to an alarming extent by Mr. Johnstone, at the Birmingham end. Very many bad appointments were also made by Mr. Parker, at Wolverton, during Mr. Bury's illness and absence. The London end has suffered to an incalculable extent by the *hauteur* of Mr. Walker, who scarce knows whether his head or his heels are upmost. No engineman must approach him, except hat in hand! He is more rigid than a military officer. For the neglect of "doffing," discharge is threatened; and although this upstart cannot order instant dismissal, he can soon pick a fault to secure it. If faults are wanted, they may be found with the best of men, for none are infallible, not even, it would seem, the London Directors themselves. On the rumour of the retirement of Mr. Bury, I warned them to look for a gentleman who knew what the duties of a Locomotive Superintendent were; but they have pitched upon one who knows nothing but what he copies, and what he does copy is usually fallacious. Now, Sir, as Mr. M'Connell is placed to put the locomotive department of the division into its former position, I assure you it is a work he is not able to perform.

The first step he took to "improve" the line, was to send emissaries all round the country, just as he did when he made the Gloucester "sweep" to pick up any new men they could find. He has got from twenty to thirty new hands, some of them those who would not suit Mr. Cabrey or Mr. Fenton; and, surely, if they did not suit *them*, they are far more unfit for such a line as the Birmingham, no other line in England having the same traffic! I venture to predict that, if Mr. M'Connell has the full power to command, and control, and do just as he has a mind, there will be no want of Coroners' juries on this once

highly-popular, because remarkably safe, line. It is of no use sending circulars round to the present staff of men. One-half of them must be judiciously changed, and nearly the whole of the new; and this change Mr. M'Connell will never be able to accomplish, for no temptation of money would induce a good man to leave a good situation to serve under such a Superintendent. He has given six years' proof of this. There is not now a locomotive official on this line who is capable of giving a sound theoretical or practical opinion on locomotive matters. I speak advisedly upon this point, for I know them all, individually and collectively. It is to be hoped the Directors will reconsider this appointment. I cannot believe they could be unanimous in it; and, although they may have been misled in the selection, it can be retrieved. They have the example of Mr. Hudson in paying nearly 2,000*l.* to get rid of a gentleman who was pre-eminent for ability. Surely, then, no one could blame them for buying off one of quite the opposite stamp.

I had the satisfaction recently of visiting the locomotive works of the northern division of this line, and must bear testimony that the deputies have them in a very efficient state. I cannot help mentioning the name of Mr. Lunt, who superintends the Liverpool and Manchester division since Mr. Deurance left. From the ability he displays, he must be destined to fill a far higher situation; at present he is only subordinate to Mr. Trevethick, who has ever shown himself to be anything but a model Superintendent—(I have very high authority for using a stronger expression than this). If it had not been for Mr. Allen, at Crewe, the Junction division would long since have been in a deplorable state. All the new engines go under the name of "Allen's engines," instead of, as one would naturally suppose, "Trevethick's engines," from his position; although, by the way, every one knows that Mr. Trevethick is incapable of constructing an engine. If he continues to show his present unbearable arrogance, I must once more enter into a few particulars with respect to him. I would recommend the Directors to "pension" him off, and be done with him; they certainly would be gainers.

I have now to call your attention to the conduct of Mr. Taylor, Locomotive Superintendent of the Eastern Union line at Ipswich. This would-be-gentleman has been more fortunate than the Superintendents of most new lines in having procured picked men; but, for some time, he has laid aside prudence, and allows himself to be led from his duty. He has deputed Mr. Blyth (his time-keeper) to act, and direct the men in and out of the shed as he thinks proper. (I mean in a future letter to refer to one or two others who employ deputies.) In consequence of this time-keeper's ignorance of the shed duties, everything goes wrong. If a man offend him, his discharge immediately follows, without any explanation being allowed. Here is a Locomotive Superintendent, whose duties are of the most responsible kind, but who frequently does not reach the works till mid-day, and sometimes in a temperament not at all suited to his vocation; wounding the feelings of men of established character, and declaring that, if he could get rid of all the old engine-men, he would not have one above 4*s.* 6*d.* or 5*s.* per day. Surely he must have heard that all such experiments have proved both dangerous and expensive. Should the Board allow him to go on in his present

way, I shall enter into particulars which will not be very palatable to either party. I trust this hint will suffice, for the credit of the Directors, the interest of the proprietors, and the safety of the public.

The wretched state of things I have exhibited cannot be supported on principle or expediency. All that ever has been advanced in its behalf is "economy," and 10 per cent. dividends; and the public must remain content to suffer, in order to afford large salaries to useless drones under high and flagrant patronage. Commission after Commission has established this fact. The child that always plays on the brink of the well will one day be found in it. The Executive of this country has been forewarned many times by the press of the consequences of their apathy. We have another case pending at York, in reference to the Leeds and Bradford affair. I do not wish to prejudge that case, otherwise I would have analysed the evidence brought before the Coroner's jury, and "saddled the right horse." However, I have no fear of the result of the trial. If General Pasley's recommendation had been attended to when he was induced to give his consent to the free use of level crossings, this fatal accident would not have happened; or if my proposal of constant inspection had been resorted to, it would have been prevented. To all appearance, this Session will be allowed to pass over, and leave us, in this respect, just as we were.

To return to the Managements. I beg leave to warn Mr. Gooch, of the Great Western, not to get himself into the same dilemma as the parties have on the southern division of the London and North-Western. I can assure him that he at present stands in a very precarious situation; I venture to predict that he will have "notice" from between fifteen and twenty of his oldest and best hands during the month of March, and, perhaps, from double that number in the month of May. I know he has the power to prevent this; and, therefore, after this notice, if he should suffer, he will have himself only to blame. I am happy to be able to congratulate the Directors of the Chester and Birkenhead Railway upon the appointment of Mr. John Wakefield. Short as the time has been, he has made a manifest improvement on the management of his predecessor, Mr. Watson. The Directors of the Liverpool and Bury will have no great cause to rejoice at their selection. Mr. Wakefield will be found to be a great acquisition when the Birkenhead line gets extended, and becomes connected with the lines that are so rapidly progressing.

I have also to congratulate the Directors of the Dublin and Drogheda and the Dublin and Kingstown Railways; their locomotive managements are in a highly efficient state. The commissions and omissions of the former Board, in other respects, it is not for me at present to enter upon. I must not omit to mention that the Dalkey Atmospheric continues to go on very satisfactorily.

When I was in Ireland, the *Railway Gazette* of that country, of the 1st of February, fell into my hands. The Editor of it copied a paragraph from your *Railway Record* of the previous Saturday, which went to say that much discontent existed among the parties engaged in the working of the Great Southern and Western Railway, coupling it with a letter which appeared in the same number, which he styled "exceed-

ingly ill written." To discuss the elegance or purity of its diction is not my intention ; but it does appear that this very squeamish Editor did not understand one iota of what he was writing about, for he made a very strange mixture of the paragraph and the letter. I can bear testimony to the correctness of the paragraph ; and, at the time when it appeared, the locomotive men had sent in a memorial to the Directors, stating the particulars of the discontent that existed, and praying them to remove the cause of it. With reference to the "ill-written letter," strange as it may appear, it advocated the same principle as the Editor himself did in a paragraph of his own. This evidently showed that he knew nothing about the actual state and working of this line, although he resides almost on the spot. This Editor should, for the future, be careful not to contradict a contemporary, unless he himself understands the real facts of the case. I have thought proper to take this notice of the subject, because, from my long knowledge of you as an Editor, I have always found you particularly cautious in bringing forward any allegation against any Board, or railway official ; and when you *do* find fault, it is, I am sure, with a view to amendment, and not for the purpose of condemnation ; for your motto, at the commencement of the *Railway Record*, was "Still pleased to praise, but not afraid to blame." As I proceed to elucidate the present working of this railway, I think I shall be able to withdraw the veil from the eyes of the Irish Editor ; and in pointing out the cause of the present discord, I shall then show how it can be effectually remedied.

On my approach to the locomotive works at Inchicore, to my astonishment I saw, in the midst of a large field, a building to all appearance tumbling to decay. Every part was in utter confusion. There were no workshops of any description. The blacksmiths were working in canvas tents ; the pattern-makers in a temporary wooden shed (the offices comprising a part of the same) ; the fitters fumbling about in the half-finished running-engine shed ; and valuable machinery lying about exposed to the weather. I had expected to see a very different sight, particularly when I knew that Mr. Deurance had been placed at the head of that department—a gentleman who had maintained an unsullied career on the Liverpool and Manchester, in co-operation with Mr. Wood, with credit to himself and profit to the Company. From all the inquiry I could make, I was unable to ascertain with certainty where to place the blame. Blame there *must* be somewhere. If Mr. Deurance has relaxed in his former energy, he should be removed ; but I cannot see that blame can be attached to him in this part of the business, for he could not have had the power of retarding the building of the works. The onus, therefore, must lie with the Directors. If they seek to excuse themselves by saying that they are short of money, why do they prosecute the expensive building at King's-bridge station—a thing of ornament instead of real utility to the public ; whereas, on the perfection of the locomotive works depends the stability and working of the line, both as regards safety and economy. Under present circumstances, economy is out of the question. No judicious arrangement or *modus operandi* can be resorted to.

I now come to the principal feature of a railway after it has been

made, namely, locomotive engines. On the Great Southern and Western line they are composed of two sets from different makers; and from difference of opinion as to the capabilities of the two, emanates the discord alluded to. The first set of engines was made by Messrs. Sharp, Brothers, and Co. On being tried, these were found to be completely adapted for the line, which has many heavy inclines and sharp curves. The other set are made by Messrs. Bury, Curtis, and Kennedy. On these being tried, they could not compete with the others. The consequence was, that the Company would not take the delivery of them until they were fit for the work. This is what the Irish Editor referred to in the latter part of his paragraph. After transmogrifying the "ill-written letter," he says, "any person must admit that the Directors are right in seeing that the engines supplied are fully capable and efficient." There can be no two opinions upon this point; but then an independent and unbiassed course should be taken to prove the fact. Is it just and proper that Mr. Colville, who has been sent to overhaul, alter, and re-alter the machinery, until he can make it effective,—is it just, when he finds all his attempts unavailable, to make a sweeping declaration that there is not a fit and proper engineman employed by Mr. Deurance? How can the men but be offended, when they are a body who hold as high a reputation, as experienced and trustworthy enginemen, as any body of enginemen in the three kingdoms? Mr. Colville had the audacity to recommend to the Directors to let all the enginemen go, and he would find plenty of men. What balderdash! He knows a first-rate engineman would not serve under him. I have no doubt he included Mr. Deurance in his own mind, and that he would fill his shoes, "the latchet of which he is unworthy to unloose."

The next grievance is, that when any part of the machinery breaks on the road with Bury's engines, Mr. Colville immediately throws the whole blame on the engineman, and flatly tells him that he did it on purpose, just because Sharp's engines run for months without repair. I presume it matters not to the engineman who the maker is, provided the engine does the work satisfactorily; he can have no possible private interest to serve.

After many remarks by Mr. Colville, and to satisfy that gentleman that there was no undue advantage desired, he was allowed to choose two enginemen for himself to run his engines against Sharp's, to ascertain which did the work most effectively, burned the least coke, and had to undergo the least repair. Those men were induced by some power or other to burn as much coal in secret as they could obtain, in order to keep down his consumption of coke; and this could easily be accomplished, for no part of the works is enclosed, every thing being open. Again, Mr. Colville charged the men that they had used the coke wantonly, to traduce the character of the engines, because they had used more coke than had previously been used. This gave rise to the letter as to which the Irish Editor felt sore. The writer of it meant, by the "great weight" of the gentleman, to intimate that he was put on the footplate to witness the consumption; and, as in his presence no deception could be resorted to, of course the consumption became as great as with the others. Subsequently another person was sent out in

the same way, and the consumption increased still more; which proved the delusion, coupled with other collateral evidence, of which I was an eye-witness, and in which the station-master (Mr. Dowling) took part. Mr. Colville, being again found in the wrong, made a bold attempt to interfere with the working time, which had been settled long before by Mr. Deurance. When remonstrated with by the men, he said he had the support of Sir John Macneil, and he should do as he liked. This, however, I did not believe. I am certain Sir John would not interfere with a department he has nothing to do with. He is sufficiently engaged with his own work; and, to his honour be it named, that, as respects the making of the line, stations, &c. &c., it has never been surpassed or equalled for stability. His 5-feet gauge is a decided improvement. The rails are such, and the sleepers so placed, that the estimate for keeping the permanent way in repair must be at a very low figure. Mr. Colville asserts that Sir John declares Bury's engines to be superior to Sharp's. This cannot be true; and, for this reason, that two of the engines of Bury now at Inchicore, were first run on the Dublin and Drogheda line; and Sir John himself stopped them, because of their destruction of coke. Mr. Deurance altered and improved them. Another sort of a man than Mr. Colville must be sent to decide this matter, for he can make nothing of it when put to the fair test. For example, he was to run two engines from Dublin to Carlow and back for fourteen days, without repairs, against Sharp's from Carlow to Dublin and back. The following is the result:—

|                |    |               |              |                   |              |                  |
|----------------|----|---------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Monday .....   | 18 | <i>Camel.</i> | <i>Lion.</i> |                   |              |                  |
| Tuesday .....  | 19 | do.           | do.          |                   |              |                  |
| Wednesday...   | 20 | do.           | do.          |                   |              |                  |
| Thursday ....  | 21 | do.           | do.          |                   |              |                  |
| Friday .....   | 22 | do.           | do.          |                   |              |                  |
| Saturday ..... | 23 | —             | do.          | <i>Dromedary.</i> |              |                  |
| Sunday .....   | 24 | do.           | —            | do.               |              |                  |
| Monday .....   | 25 | do.           | —            | do.               |              |                  |
| Tuesday .....  | 26 | do.           | —            | do.               |              |                  |
| Wednsday...    | 27 | do.           | —            | do.               |              |                  |
| Thursday.....  | 28 | do.           | —            | do.               |              |                  |
| Friday .....   | 29 | do.           | —            | do.               |              |                  |
| Saturday ..... | 30 | —             | —            | —                 | <i>Stag.</i> | <i>Antelope.</i> |
| Sunday .....   | 31 | —             | —            | do.               | —            | —                |
|                |    | 14            | 11           | 6                 | 8            | 1                |
|                |    |               |              |                   | 1            | 1                |

Thus, there were five engines used during fourteen days, instead of two; and instead of being done without repairs, the *Camel* was repaired three times, the *Lion* five times, and the *Dromedary* twice; while Sharp's, at Carlow, went under no repair whatever; in fact, there are not fitters there yet, because they are not required.

Why should an establishment of this kind be kept in hot water for such a length of time? The settlement of the matter is just as far off as ever; and it is all in reference to what I may say is a private squabble, besides placing the passengers in danger, through Mr. Colville's capers. Why do not the Directors take a proper step to decide it? If it had been on this side the water it would soon have been settled. These Irish Directors should at once employ an independent and competent judge,



who would do the thing effectively. To this they must come at last ; and the sooner the better, so as to restore the good feeling and harmony which are so desirable in a work of this kind.

Before I proceed, let me recommend to Mr. Deurance not further to trouble himself as to my obtaining information respecting his works, although asked by the Directors to prevent me. I excuse them on that side of the water for the attempt, for they do not know that it is beyond their reach. *You*, Sir, know well that it has been tried repeatedly on this side the Channel, and has as repeatedly failed. I hope Mr. Deurance will never act in such a manner that he will be afraid of exposure ; but be that as it may, I shall pursue my old course, in spite of attempted restrictions.

Although I have trespassed so much upon your space, I must refer to the disgraceful arrangements at the King's-bridge station, at Dublin, in order that greater attention may be paid to the comfort of the passengers. Such flagrant treatment I never witnessed before. On Monday, January 27, the passenger-train from Carlow arrived at 3.45 A. M., when the arrival-station was filled with cattle-waggon. The train had to be stopped at the bottom of the incline until the waggons were drawn out, and then the goods'-engine had to be attached to the train to take passengers to the platform (your readers must understand that the train comes down from the ticket-platform by its own momentum). After a delay of twenty minutes all the passengers got out, except two ladies, who had their private carriage on a truck. They patiently waited, expecting some servant would come and open the carriage-door, after the confusion was over (for it was great) ; but, to their dismay, they found themselves backed into the station-yard, amidst still greater confusion, for they got among five engines running about, "blowing off," "shunting" goods, ballast, and cattle ; and there they were detained upwards of an hour, in the greatest alarm, for they could not understand why they were placed in such a position : and yet there was Mr. Dowling, strutting about the station as if nothing was the matter ! Again, on Saturday, the 30th, a special-train from Dublin to Salins and back, was engaged by a party of gentlemen. On the return to the Dublin station, neither station-master nor porter was to be seen. The carriage-doors were locked, and the party could not get out. After a short period of excitement, a gentleman was seen crawling out of one of the windows. The example was soon followed, when the whole got out in the lapse of three minutes. If you had witnessed the scene, you could not, while you condemned, but have laughed ; for the last was a gentleman remarkable for rotundity, and it required three of his friends to drag him out ! If this had been a stout lady, or any lady at all, she would have been rather awkwardly situated. But the matter did not end with this. There were a number of gentlemen not connected with the specials (it was a hunting day), who were at liberty to get into the train, upon condition that they should pay their fares on arrival at Dublin ; but, as all followed the example of the station-master, no one was there to receive the cash ; and off the parties went, laughing at the joke, as they called it. I would recommend, by way of improvement, to the Directors to make the chief, deputy-master ; and the deputy, chief-master. Much

better arrangements would be carried out by Mr. Mellon. He does not attend to his personal decoration so much as Mr. Dowling; besides, he has had much experience as a railway official. Who ever heard of a station-master being allowed to attend Directors' meetings, and interfere in locomotive matters, and other business, with which he has nothing at all to do? These inexperienced College-green Directors must come over to Lime-street, Liverpool, now and then, and learn how to conduct their affairs as they ought to be conducted.

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### LETTER XLVIII.

Birmingham, March 15, 1847.

WHILE the predictions contained in my last letter are fresh in the memory of your readers, I wish to call their attention to what has taken place since the date of it. With reference to the warning I gave Mr. Gooch, on the Great Western, I beg to say that twelve established enginemen have given in their "notice." I stated that from fifteen to twenty would leave during the month of March. Now, we have only arrived at the middle of that month, and more than half the number *have already intimated their intention of leaving*. How, indeed, could it be otherwise, when the French Directors hold out such inducements for experienced men! A Chairman of one of the French Boards remarked, the other day, that they had in France about fifty English drivers, at high wages; and yet the Companies had found, by experience, that they were gainers, for previous to sending to England for men, the waste of coke and machinery was frightful, to say nothing of safety, and that they had given their Superintendent instructions to be prepared with a sufficient number of hands of the same class as their present staff, by the time another portion of the line should be opened. Thus, Sir, through the strange proceedings of our Locomotive Superintendents, we shall be continually drained of our best drivers. New drivers must be made, and, as a matter of course, many of them will become competent; but then, from the treatment they receive, *they also* will go off to where they are better paid, and their qualifications better appreciated. Our English engine-drivers are now exerting themselves to raise the moral condition and *status* of their body in society. The Admiralty very wisely have raised the condition of the steam-boat engineers; and why should not locomotive engineers be raised likewise? They are day by day becoming of more importance to the community.

I have often thought it would be a very desirable thing if all Boards of Direction would order a working model of a locomotive engine to be made and placed in a room, for the purpose of instructing young men in the proper management and working of it. Let competent individuals order the young men to disconnect it in various ways; and at other times, let the machinery be disarranged without the pupil's knowledge, and then desire him to set it to work, and, when he found it

defective, to discover what was the matter ; after which let him be instructed in the best and readiest method to put it right. Frequently the machinery becomes slightly disarranged upon the road, and from want of sufficient knowledge the trains get completely fixed, until an engine is sent for ; while, by adopting the practice I suggest, the driver would be able to meet the difficulty in a minute. To have the model at all times ready to be set to work, and not have occasion to put fire in it, I would have a steam-pipe at command, to connect it with the boiler at pleasure, which would answer every purpose, and not destroy the machinery by fire.

I cannot conceive how our English Directors are so blinded to the pecuniary interests of their constituents, and why our Government continues so apathetic respecting a matter in which the public are so deeply concerned. I have repeatedly remarked, that I by no means advocate absolute Government dictation, but merely that the Government should continually take cognisance of the parties that are appointed. It would be a matter of indifference to the Government or the public what the rate of wages might be ; all that is requisite for the Government to do is, to take care that improper or incompetent men are not employed. Wages would regulate themselves, like any other marketable commodity. This must be resorted to some day—necessity will demand it. Why, then, should it be deferred for one hour ?

I noticed in my last, that I suspected Mr. Colville had an eye to the retirement of Mr. Deurance, of the Great Southern and Western Railway (Ireland). I am informed that, from the numerous and annoying misrepresentations of Mr. Colville, Mr. Deurance has given in his resignation. If this be true, and the Directors are foolish enough to accept it, I shall not fail to denounce the conduct of these College-green gentlemen with all the energy I can. Why should the public safety be so long tampered with, in consequence, as I said before, of a "private squabble," when the simple matter could be settled and put to rest in a day, by a disinterested and competent judge. I can see no possible difficulty in it. There must be some very extraordinary underhand work at the bottom of this affair ; for Mr. Colville, it would appear, has in view to continue his present career for some time, as he has erected a private office for himself. There must be something materially wrong in those ten new engines, when Mr. Colville, eight fitters, and four labourers, have been fumbling so long with them, without arriving at anything effective to make them do the required work in a satisfactory manner. I hope, for the sake of the proprietors, I shall not have again to return to this subject ; if I do, I assure the Directors they will have cause to repent it.

I beg here to recommend to Mr. M'Connell to reconsider the edict he issued last Monday morning at Wolverton. If he persist in it, no man that has a spark of feeling for character will subject himself to such treatment. I shall watch this gentleman. I once more call the attention of the Directors of this line to the misconduct of night Superintendent Palmer. As I stated in my first notice, Mr. Johnstone palmed him upon Mr. Bury, holding out that he was possessed of high qualifications. *He, too,* must have his deputy, of whom I shall treat here-

after! Every one knows that the Birmingham line has much traffic; and, under present circumstances, pilot-engines should always be kept in the best possible condition, and particularly under night duty. Now, the other week, this would-be sole "Gaffer" strutted home, leaving his deputy sleeping in the office, without a pilot-engine on the station, or an engineman. If the Directors do not interfere in this matter, I shall at all hazards enter into particulars, so that the public may be placed on their guard as to what they may expect under such flagrant mismanagement. I have all the particulars,—day, date, and hour,—so that there can be no mistake. When my next letter appears, I shall have a few theoretical and practical questions to put to Mr. McConnell upon his recent experiments upon the broad gauge, and his advocacy of it. Surely he does not know the position in which he is at present placed?

You shall very shortly hear from me again. I have a variety of subjects in my mind which will amuse your readers, although, perhaps, not add anything to the pockets of many of them.

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### LETTER XLIX.

Birmingham, May 12, 1847.

In a letter which appeared in your journal of the 13th of March, I had occasion to notice a ridiculous paragraph inserted in the *Irish Railway Gazette*. In the same paper, dated 3rd May, there appeared another leading paragraph, which evidently shows that the Editor is totally ignorant of what he writes about. I shall prove distinctly that he is quite as much so in this latter instance, as I clearly showed he was in the former.

In writing respecting the experimental trips on the Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland, he says,—“As to the satisfactory character of these trips we cannot speak, not having had an opportunity of being present. From occasional visits we paid to portions of the line, we find that the rails are of a very light description—about 50lbs. to the yard; and that they are laid, not on cross sleepers, but longitudinal bearings. This certainly is not an improvement in railway construction.”

If this Editor did not know the “satisfactory” character of these trips, in justice to all the parties connected with that undertaking, he ought to have abstained from ambiguous allusions. His “occasional visits to portions of the line,” must have been very superficial indeed, when he states that the rails are *about* 50lbs. to the yard; wishing it to be inferred, no doubt, that they are under that weight. Now, Sir, what shall be said of this statement when I tell you that these rails weigh from 70 to 75lbs. to the yard, the average of them consequently being upwards of 72lbs.? As to this, the firm of Messrs. Thompson and Co., and the Blaemanen Company, can bear ample testimony.

The Editor complains that “the rails are not laid on cross sleepers, but on longitudinal bearings.” This is a malicious statement, parti-

cularly when it is coupled with the close of the sentence. The fact is, the rails are laid both upon cross sleepers and longitudinal beams, of great strength, measuring twelve inches broad by six inches deep. These longitudinal bearings are placed upon heavy cross sleepers, at regular distances, and are well secured; and where the line is curved, the number of these cross ties are doubled, to prevent the possibility of the rails getting out of gauge. This plan of continuous bearing, and the form of the rail, prevent the necessity of having the rails of greater weight, as they would require to be if on transverse bearings alone; since the pressure is communicated direct to the ground, instead of the rail having to support the cross sleepers as by a beam. I say, without fear of contradiction, that Mr. Hemans, the Engineer, has made a decided improvement in "railway construction," instead of the contrary, as the Irish Editor would wish the public to infer.

I would candidly ask this Editor, if Sir John Macneil (his partner in the *Gazette*, I believe) be not getting jealous of his late assistant, Mr. Hemans, who is becoming his great rival in the construction of Irish railways? I can assure the Editor that I also have made "occasional visits" to the Midland Great Western line; and that, when I *do* visit any railway, I am not in the habit of making my inspection superficial. I endeavour to make myself acquainted with facts, and hence am never afraid of contradiction. I would once more caution this Editor not to write upon a subject of which he evidently knows nothing.

While on this subject of Irish Railways, I may briefly notice what took place on Monday last, at the Inchicore station of the Great Southern and Western Railway. By doing so, the Editor of the *Gazette* will have an opportunity of correcting me, if I am wrong, considering the position of the individual at his back. On Monday last, Mr. Deurance gave up the locomotive management of this line—a circumstance, I fear, the Directors will have much cause to regret; although I am happy I can congratulate them upon the selection of an individual to supply his place (nominally, it would appear,) who has secured many laurels. The gentleman I allude to was, in its early days, connected with the London and Birmingham, and then, during seven years, with the Greenwich line; and latterly he has acquired considerable fame from the constructing and finishing of the Jamaica Railways. But with all this talent (and I should be sorry to rob him of one particle of it) and, notwithstanding his experience as a civil engineer and a practical engineer besides, Mr. Miller must fall infinitely short as a Locomotive Superintendent, compared with Mr. Deurance. The principal part of Mr. Deurance's life has been successfully devoted to this particular department. He has the testimony of the old Liverpool and Manchester Directors, and of the indefatigable and able Mr. Booth of that line, and the opinion of Mr. Wood; but above all, the locomotive books of that line, for many years, will be a lasting memorial of his indomitable perseverance and ability. Yet, although possessed of all this talent and experience, the Great Southern and Western Directors must part with him, only on account of his candour, and because he would not succumb to private interests. By this untoward event, the Mullingar Directors have been successful in securing the able services of

this gentleman. Where he now is, he will have no changeable Sir John to serve; and it is to be hoped that the Directors will grant him that reward which he deserves, and which has been so unjustly denied to him by the King's-bridge Directory.

I shall mention a few incidents worth recording, because I have no doubt I shall have occasion to refer hereafter to the new Management of the Great Southern and Western line. Can it be possible that Mr. Miller is to be responsible for all the misdeeds that Mr. Alexander Colville will inevitably commit if he be allowed his own fling, as he says he must? In proof of this, I may state that he was not an hour in power before he went into the office, and gave orders that the twenty-five men who were making the iron roofs of the buildings, should be discharged, and that the turners' wages should be reduced 2s. per week. After giving this order, he remarked that he would now show them Taff Vale management (what a reference to be sure!), and that then he would make the works go like the pendulum of a clock! I suppose he meant the old hour-glass, which is still common in the ancient country—meaning that he would continually turn the works upside down, until he stumbled upon the right thing. If this be his intention, I shall have something to say to him. The Directors must not think from the reductions in the pay-sheet that will appear at first, that he has anything to do with economy in the management; for, although the pay of the roof-makers be taken off, they had nothing to do with locomotive matters direct—they were employed on construction alone. I would ask the Directors, will these works ever be finished? In my last two letters I stated that Mr. Colville had been unable to make his ten engines do the work intended for them. How many imperfectly-welded connecting rods has he broken? To what danger and alarm were the passengers put the week before last, on approaching Inchicore station, by the breaking down of the *Antelope* engine and bursting of the boiler? Perhaps the loss of a life or two, some day, will bring the Directors and Sir John to their senses.

I had intended to treat upon the tumbling down of the bungled coke-ovens, the patent *hay buffers* at the bottom of the gullet, which afford provender to the cabmen's horses, during the dear season, and the necessity of men becoming free and accepted Masons under Sir John's banner, to ensure protection. Mr. Colville has become one; Mr. Miller will require to be one also, otherwise he must move.

I had also intended to analyse Captain Coddington's Report upon the late accident on the Hull and Selby line. He has evidently made no improvement upon his predecessor. How long is the public to be thus humbugged by Royal Engineers, and Captains of the Royal Navy, as if railways had to do with bomb-shells, top-gallant sails, &c. &c.? I shall revert to these matters hereafter.

## LETTER L.

Birmingham, June 9, 1847.

SINCE the date of my last letter, the kingdom has been thrown into consternation, through its length and breadth, by three lamentable catastrophes on railways. Many people are in consequence denouncing the railway system; and though it was not my intention to address you at present, my motive in now doing so is to endeavour to disabuse the public mind of the many erroneous opinions formed, pending the verdicts of the juries.

I have made most minute inquiry respecting every one of these accidents. I believe I can trace the cause of each; and you may rely that I shall not fail to supply your readers with the result of my inquiries. Prudence, however, dictates the propriety of deferring going into minute detail, not wishing to prejudice the question; and, therefore, I shall offer only a few general remarks at present, reserving other matters till all the judicial inquiries are at an end.

First, then, with reference to the Dee-bridge affair. So far as this inquiry has gone, the ex-Inspector-General has taken a very prominent part in the evidence. He said he had pronounced the bridge perfectly safe; but now that it is broken, he says it would not be safe, although put into its original state! His exposition of the deflection of metal is as erroneous as possibly can be; and if the General will appoint any day, giving me three days' notice, I shall prove to him practically that he is in error.

The second event is the occurrence on the Brighton line. Mr. Thos. Kirtley here takes a prominent part; but nothing direct or definite has been elicited from him. His ambiguous imputations on Stephenson's patent engines would be perfectly ludicrous, were they not something worse. I shall enter upon this point in my next, when I proceed with the particulars of this affair. The evidence given by Robert Peel, brother of the unfortunate stoker, is of a piece with his master's. No experienced man would advance what he said with respect to shutting off the steam. He was guilty, too, of attempting to mislead the jury, by stating that he had been a driver on the York and North Midland for two years. He was no such thing, as I shall hereafter show, when I give his history, and likewise that of his two brothers. I shall give also a detail of Mr. Bonner's mission to the York line to obtain men for Mr. Thomas Kirtley, and notice the misrepresentations he made. I shall also enter into particulars respecting the deceased driver Gregory. You will remember I predicted that something of this sort would take place, through inexperienced men being employed.

The London and North-Western accident caused no astonishment to me. The primary cause of the occurrence I shall, in a future letter, prove to be the proceedings of Mr. Bruyeres. In June, July, and August of last year, I predicted that something of a very serious nature would take place under Mr. Bruyeres' arrangement. The men he had placed at the points were unfit for their duty. Even if the first had

made a mistake, the second, if he had been worth anything, could have prevented the accident, the siding being fully half a mile long. When I revert to this line, I shall also notice an express-train accident that took place at Roade the other week, arising from the very same cause as that at Wolverton. In the meantime, let me ask Mr. Bruyeres to refer to his orders of the 1st December, and his counter-order on the 18th of the same month, and to reflect on the folly of instructing railway clerks to do one thing, while the locomotive department issues orders to do quite the contrary. I should wish Mr. Bruyeres to refer to the goods'-train time-book, page 25; and I should like to know the reason why he has got new leaves printed, to be pasted over that page; and why he should fine a railway servant 2*l.* for speaking the truth.

One word to the Directors of the London and North-Western Company. In a former letter, while treating of the management of Mr. Bruyeres, I referred to the Midland Junction points, and to the improper persons Mr. Bruyeres had placed there. There are now at that junction eighteen pairs of points, and not one pair is properly attended to; five pair are 200 yards distant from the box; and how can it be possible that one man should attend to them all? When an accident takes place, the public are condoled with, and told that a policeman is in custody; while those to whose mismanagement the occurrence may clearly be traced, go scathless! Why, the third-class train, the other week, was run through the goods' siding at this very place! Luckily, there were no waggons standing on the line, otherwise the collision would probably have been as fatal as the one now under investigation. There is an old man placed here, who cannot see 100 yards from his post; and the next policeman has often to run up to him, and leave his own post, to give the proper signal. The old man is "cheap," and Mr. Bruyeres seems to consider this quite sufficient, let the consequences be what they may.

Allow me just to hint to Mr. Matthew Kirtley, at Derby, to interdict Mr. Thomas Markland, at Rugby, from interfering with the enginemen in the same way as Mr. Thomas Kirtley has done at Brighton. I assure Mr. Matthew that the side-wind "will not do," even if "King Crispin," and all the "Knights of the Thimble," were to issue an edict to that effect.

I send this hasty note, to show your readers that I am not inattentive to what is passing, and because I know that many parties, high and low, will expect that I should take up these very serious questions. They shall not be disappointed.



## LETTER LI.

Birmingham, July 27, 1847.

My long and unexpected detention in Ireland has prevented me till now fulfilling the promise I made in the conclusion of my last letter.

On my way to Ireland, I went *via* Chester, on the final day of the inquest upon the parties killed by the falling of the Dee-bridge. I attended the inquest, and was astonished to hear parties giving scientific evidence to quite the contrary effect of that which they had given the day before. I hope these parties will never again push themselves forward as being really theoretical and scientific men. It is true they have proved themselves to be very excellent practical men; but *that* is no reason why they should place themselves upon an equality with a Stephenson or a Locke. I assure them they thereby only hold themselves up to be a laughing-stock to the public. I heard Captain Simmonds read the clever Report, drawn up by himself and Mr. Walker; and, during the recital, Mr. Stephenson very ably brought this youthful Captain to a "dead fix." It would be unentertaining to the majority of your readers were I to state the details here, (although I have notes of them), they being merely upon strictly scientific points on which Mr. Stephenson stood his ground.

This Report has been allowed by all to be very ingenious in one respect—namely, in "trimming." It turns about with the same facility as the weathercock to the wind; in fact, it leaves the merits of the question just where they were before the inquest commenced. Nevertheless, it had the effect of "bamboozling" the jury; indeed, the jury was composed of materials totally inadequate to arrive at a due verdict upon so much conflicting scientific testimony, nay, I am sure the Report would have caused a variety of opinions amongst a jury composed of the ablest C. E.'s in the kingdom. Mr. Walker has been long famed for such Reports. This one brought to my remembrance a circumstance that happened some fifteen years ago in a town in Scotland, where there was wanted an Act of Parliament to enable certain persons to bring water into the town. There were three or four conflicting parties, each having a different locality to bring the water from. To satisfy all parties, and to bring the matter to an amicable conclusion, Government was applied to for an engineer to settle the business. Mr. Walker was appointed. He went down, heard and examined the different schemes, and made his Report in such a manner that every one of the parties gathered from the Report that their particular scheme was the best, thus leaving them in exactly the same position as they were in before Mr. Walker was employed! In like manner he has acted in the matter of the Dee-bridge, thus verifying the old saying, that there is little or nothing in a Government official but a *name*.

With reference to the fatal catastrophe on the Chichester branch of the Brighton Railway and the proceedings of Mr. Thomas Kirtley, it would be a waste of your valuable columns to go over the evidence given before the Coroner's jury, as very little of it was at all to the purpose;

but I cannot pass over the most extraordinary course of Mr. Kirtley in filing against you "a criminal information," when he must know that what you advanced was substantially the truth, with the exception only that Johnson, the driver, left a short time previous to the accident. All the other allegations are, I venture to affirm, perfectly correct, as will hereafter, I doubt not, be proved before the public, should Mr. Thomas Kirtley be so ill-advised as to go on with the prosecution.

The affidavit sworn to by Mr. Kirtley, and which recently appeared in your columns, was to me the most extraordinary document I ever read, when I reflected upon the party from whom it proceeded—a man who, every seventh day, puts himself forward to inculcate the precepts of the Gospel! Allow me just to touch upon one point of this *sworn* testimony; its farther dissection shall be at your service in another form. In the offset, he says that he has been in practice about twenty years as an engineer, and has had great experience. Now, this is not true, for he has not been more than sixteen years in this part of the country. He has not been an engineer for twenty years, nor nearly so. His first appearance in Lancashire was not earlier than the year 1831, as a labourer at the Crown-street-yard, Liverpool, his previous occupation in his native county being simply a shoemaker. He was a fireman and an engine-driver for a long time subsequent to this; and I shall be prepared to get you affidavits, if you require them, from respectable parties, that he repaired shoes at Warrington less than sixteen years ago. If *that* be engineering experience, of course he is correct, but not as to time.

With reference to the actual state of the engine No. 40, I also pledge myself to obtain evidence, if necessary (I am in possession of a considerable portion already), that that engine was not in a fit state to be sent out with a train prior to the day of the accident; indeed, when Captain Coddington went to examine the engine, it was so dilapidated that it was impossible for him to judge in what state it had been when it went out on that day; and yet the Captain said he thought it had been in good repair. What preposterous stuff is this! I tell Captain Coddington that he could not judge whether an engine was in good repair or not for running a train, by standing and looking at it in the shed. Provided it was perfectly clean, it would appear to him, and to other *unpractical* men, to be in good repair, while, at the same time, it might not be able to run at all. Even Mr. Thomas Kirtley, with all his twenty years' experience, could not tell. Again, he swears that the unfortunate driver (Gregory) "was a practised driver, and had frequently had charge of engines before the one in question, having been employed on the Midland, and other railways, in the capacity of engine-driver." This averment also is untrue. Gregory was not an experienced engine-driver; he was a driver on the Midland line for only about five months. Ample testimony can be obtained at Derby on this point; and also that he never was an engine-driver on any other line, except for the few days he was on the Brighton. The short time during which Mr. Kirtley had charge of the old North Midland shed fully proved his incapacity for such a situation. The whole of the engine stock went to wreck under his care; but he had the patronage of Mr. Peter Clarke. When Mr. Matthew Kirtley

got the charge of the shed, after the amalgamation, he could not help saying that he had no idea the engines were in such a state. So much dilapidated were they, that it was with the greatest difficulty he could get the traffic carried on. I have no hesitation in appealing to the brother upon this point. You may remember how, at the time, I exposed his proceedings, and how he hid his "botched work" in the caverns under the shed, which were never examined till after he left. The experience he displayed in his own shop at Warrington I shall fully explain, if he gives me an opportunity. In no one instance did he prove that he was a fit and proper person to occupy such a responsible situation as he now holds, always excepting in the eyes of Mr. Peter Clarke, to whom he is subservient, and for whom, if anything happens, he takes the blame. Just see what has taken place under his management since the No. 40 affair. "Accidents" (as they are called) continually occurred under him on the North Midland line, and subsequently on the Brandling Junction, until he was discharged from the latter place; after which, confidence was restored. I dare say he will long remember the honourable retreat he made thence.

I cannot help remarking here the great loss the Brighton Directors have inflicted on their shareholders, under the false notion of economy, by losing the services of Mr. Gray, and, moreover, those of Mr. Eaton, who was his foreman. Mr. Gray has retired from railways; Mr. Eaton has gone to the Manchester and Leeds; and, for the short time he has been there, has proved his value, for he has put the whole stock of that line into so efficient a state of repair, that he has scarcely anything to do for his fitters. What a contrast to that of this stock twelve months ago, and what an immense saving it must be to the Company, independent of the safety of the passengers! I hope this state of things will long continue, to the benefit of all concerned.

Richard Hesketh's affidavit is also untrue, in many respects, and in one in particular, which can easily be proved. I shall be prepared to afford you ample evidence of what I state. His first appearance on any line was in the year 1833, on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. For several years he was employed filling the waggons with manure for Chat-moss, between which place and Manchester a considerable traffic was at that time carried on. During this period he was put on as occasional cleaner, and sometimes cokeman; and this was only when any of the regular men were away, from sickness or other causes. In the course of time he became a regular fireman, but this was long subsequent to fourteen years ago. The Company used one of their oldest and smallest engines for the manure traffic; it was called the Moss engine. Some time in the year 1837, the engine-driver of the Moss engine was on leave, and Hesketh petitioned to be allowed to run the engine until the man returned (he was then fireman to it). The request was granted, and this was his first attempt at drivership. It occurred only ten years back, instead of fourteen, as sworn to. But mark, he was not then considered to be a driver, for, on the return of the engineman, Hesketh went back to the coking. Some considerable time subsequent to this, the Company were short of an engineman to

take a train from Manchester to Liverpool, and Hesketh was appointed, but before he reached his destination he made a reckless "pitch in" to another train, causing great damage. For this recklessness, he was "reduced" again to a stoker for a long time. Afterwards he was made a driver, and continued so for a very few months on the Liverpool and Manchester line, whence he went to Belgium. It is useless at the present time to follow him further, as probably a better opportunity will arrive, my object at present being merely to show the public how little faith can be placed on the affidavit alluded to. No one would dream that Hesketh's first and second attempt at drivership should be reckoned; but even if they were, it would amount to ten years. It would just be as correct to reckon from the time he was a mere labourer the same as his master; and, how then he can swear that he has been an engine-driver fourteen years, is to me most astonishing. He and his master should have remembered, that there are many men alive who worked with them at the commencement, when they first went upon a railway, and know all their history.

As to the Wolverton affair, the coroner's inquiry has been fully before the public. The verdict in this case was perfectly proper in one way, but it was grievous towards Fossey. Looking at it in the proper view, Fossey was not so much to blame as were his superiors, namely, Mr. Bruyeres, the general superintendent, and Mr. Bedford, the police superintendent. Fossey was quite an unfit man for such an important spot. His predecessor was a man of eight or nine years' experience, and was removed from that station, not from any misconduct, but through a private squabble between two women. I am afraid to go into the particulars of the removal of this experienced man, lest I should bring down upon you (so thin-skinned are these gentry) another "criminal information." Suffice it to say, that the man was, in my opinion, most unwarrantably removed. I fear it is no new thing for Mr. Bedford to make a rash use of his powers, or for Mr. Bruyeres to sanction such proceedings. I shall just allude to one or two cases, taking the last first. Previous to Fossey's trial, his *butty* got ready a subscription paper, to endeavour to raise a little money to assist him on his trial, which was a perfectly legitimate proceeding, whatever Mr. Bruyeres and Mr. Bedford may think. However, the circumstance came to Mr. Bedford's ears, whereupon he went to the man and asked him if it was true. The man said it was when Mr. Bedford ordered him to desist, otherwise he would discharge him. The man gave some sharp reply, and shortly afterwards—of course not in consequence of that reply—the man *was* sent adrift, and the Company thereby lost an excellent servant. Again, at the Birmingham end, there was a very steady man recommended to the Company by an influential proprietor. He was trained to attend to the points, and placed at a very important set, close by the engine-shed. After this man had successfully attended those points for upwards of six months, he applied for pointsman's wages; but, for some reason, he not only was not successful in his application, but was immediately removed to the station gates, and a man put on who was, and is, totally unfit for the duty. The consequence was, the occurrence of three or four accidents, in about as many weeks. In one of them a tender was broken and the axle bent,

and the train detained upwards of an hour. Farther up the line there was a pointsman of upwards of eight years' standing. From some unexplained cause, this long-tried and careful servant was removed up the line to a solitary station, at reduced wages (you must mark that a pointsman gets 3s. more than an ordinary policeman). The consequence was, that the man gave notice and left the service. His successor at the points shortly after caused two accidents. I maintain, that these unwarrantable removals caused destruction of property, delays of trains, and much risk of life; and when such conduct is tolerated, what else can be expected but fatal collisions, and innumerable minor accidents which are never heard of? For the truth of what I have stated, I appeal to Mr. Johnston, the Locomotive Superintendent. He knows that what I have stated is correct, for all the parties I have alluded to are under his eye.

One word as to the accident of Tuesday, the 20th July, on this line. There are some extraordinary circumstances attending that accident. The cause I can easily account for. It resembles one of those cases in which Mr. M'Connell used to figure on the Gloucester line. It arose from a cause to which, on his appointment at Wolverton, I predicted he would resort on this line if he had his full fling—which it appears he has got (or at all events he assumes it). I cannot but think that Mr. M'Connell's appointment reflects little credit upon a Board which, from its commencement, has been held up as a pattern for ability in everything connected with the management of a railway. If the Directors do not interfere, I venture to prophecy that it will not be long before they have another inquest. To return to the accident alluded to. The driver who had charge of 108 engine, which made the "pitch in" on the above-mentioned day, was named Clayton. He is a new hand, and never known to have been an engineman till Mr. M'Connell put him on. He never was even a fireman. The previous driver of No. 108 was long tried and experienced on the line, but he was removed, and Clayton, a fitter, and a favourite of M'Connell's, was appointed his successor.

This Clayton, on his appointment, said he would show the — what driving was, and he has kept his word; for he certainly has shown them "driving" to the tune of some hundreds of pounds! How life escaped in this instance is to me a miracle, for the concussion was so great that the divisions of the second-class carriages were broken. But, the most extraordinary circumstance connected with this affair I have now to relate, and it shows plainly how far favouritism can be carried by officials, when they themselves are likely to be implicated. When the news of the catastrophe reached Wolverton, and that Clayton was in custody, Mr. M'Connell sent for him to Wolverton, took him up next day before the Directors, or a Committee of them, pleaded his cause, and wished to continue him as a driver. The Directors, however, were inexorable, and very justly and properly ordered his immediate discharge. And this was all the punishment which this reckless fellow received! I do believe that if it had been an old experienced hand who had committed this unwarrantable blunder, Mr. M'Connell would have left him to his fate. Before the magistrates he inevitably must have

gone, and could not have escaped with less than two months' imprisonment, or a fine of 10*l*. I say that to allow him to get off without such punishment was to defeat the ends of justice, and, as has been said, to "drive a coach and four through an Act of Parliament."

I took the liberty, in my last letter, of saying a word to the Directors of the southern division of this line, and I shall once more take that liberty. In the first place, I beg to call their attention to the commotion which Mr. M'Connell is causing on the line amongst his men. It is well known that, on coming to the line, he engaged a redundancy of men of all sorts, under the pretence that he was afraid all the old men would leave because of his appointment—a fact which of itself shows that conscience pricked him—that he knew he was inadequate for the important task, and that he was afraid no good and experienced man would serve under him. How pitiable he must be, even in his own eyes! And now, to get his staff reduced, he continually finds fault with the old hands, and dismisses them. The Directors must know that the southern division of this line is of such a character as ought not to be thus trifled with. From the immense traffic that exists, and is still increasing, no man unacquainted with the line should have the conduct of an engine, unless under extraordinary circumstances, and these circumstances have not yet arisen. The drivers of this line should, so to speak, be actually bred upon it; and yet Mr. M'Connell seems determined to get rid of the old hands as soon as he can, be the consequence what it may. Really, the absurdity of certain of his orders to some of the oldest hands on the line is astonishing. I have reason to think that *some* of the Directors know of these absurdities; and they must be checked, otherwise something more awful will ensue than has already occurred. Mr. M'Connell went down to Peterborough on Monday, and gave orders that every driver should clean his own engine. This unwarrantable order must be resisted by all the means that can be adopted. Mr. M'Connell expects he will accomplish the same thing as Mr. Thomas Kirtley did at Brighton, namely, make all the old men leave, and then we shall have more bloodshed, and more Coroners' inquests.

There is another point to which I would briefly call their attention, and that is, to the condition of the points at the Birmingham station. They have been for some time in a very bad state of repair. I intended to notice this in my last, but forgot to do so. There are ten pair of points for the trains to pass over. Six pair of them face the London trains, and the dangerous system prevails of pushing the trains from behind from the ticket platform. Now, as the trains generally come in at the rate of from 10 to 12 miles an hour, if any of those points were to catch the first, or even the second, carriage, the engine would, to a certainty, dash through the carriages; and what destruction of life must then ensue! I do not blame the Directors for what I complain of, as it is impossible for them to know all these things, and they have paid servants for the purpose of looking after them; but now that the matter is brought before them, I hope they will see to it. A few weeks back I witnessed the mail-train come against one of the points, which made the carriage leap from the rail several inches; and so likewise, on

another day, did No. 31 engine. At the moment I trembled, and so did several others; and although this occurred before I went to Ireland, still I find the points in the same condition as before. I hear it said, "Oh, never mind, there will be a new line laid down soon, and we shall put them straight altogether;" but how much life may be sacrificed before then! I consider there is not a moment to be lost in attending to this; and, moreover, the Company pays just the same as if the points were kept in perfect order. Suppose a fatal accident were to take place at this very spot from the defectiveness of the points, to whom would the blame be attached? Why, to the poor switchman! He would be taken into custody, and all the evidence that could be obtained would be brought against him; and his fellow-servants would, probably, be debarred from assisting him.

While upon this important matter, I cannot help expressing my astonishment that Directors generally do not see the necessity of making the situation of pointsman more valuable. These men receive only 21*s.* per week. Look at the responsibility that is attached to the occupation. They have the lives of a whole train of passengers in their hands 50 or 60 times a day. It is awful to contemplate with what harshness they are treated by tyrannical Superintendents and drunken inspectors, continually and unjustly threatening them with reports, fines, and dismissals. There must be an immediate curb put upon this undue use of power. I am aware that this would entail additional labour on a portion of a Board of Directors; but I am sure none would grudge it if they thought that by doing so they were thereby to save the life of even one fellow-creature. No train accident has occurred of late which could not have been prevented by prudence, due precaution, and proper management, with the exception of the Dee-bridge accident; and *that*, I am firmly convinced, arose from a fault in the metal, and not from the particular construction of the bridge—for the very same construction of a bridge has been long tested. These remarks, I hope will receive the attention of every Director in the kingdom, for they more or less apply to them all.

Mr. M'Connell's deputy (Mr. Crawford), at Rugby, is following his master's example by irritating the feelings of the old hands. If he does not alter, I shall enter into a few particulars respecting him, which he and his master perhaps will not like. I can assure them both that the Gloucester system will not be endured at Rugby; and I am at the same time certain the Directors will not sanction it. I am happy to state that Mr. Markland, of the Midland Counties', at Rugby, has improved, from the hint I gave him in my last. I hope Mr. Crawford will do so likewise, and save me trouble and the Directors anxiety.

You have already acquainted your readers that the Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland was opened for traffic on Monday, the 28th June as far as Enfield, a distance of 26½ miles. Allow me to make a few observations respecting this line, because there have been a variety of opinions put forth against it.

On the previous Monday, the Directors and a party of gentlemen went up the line, at a moderate speed, and stopped at every station, where the whole of the Board got out, and each Director examined for

himself the arrangements that had been made for opening to the public on the following Monday. I, too, was permitted the same privilege ; and I certainly must allow that, for plainness of construction, combined with neatness and ample accommodation, these stations confer great credit on Mr. Hemans, the Engineer. All arrived safely at Enfield, where a dinner was ready for the Directors and their friends, there being two hours allowed for refreshment ; after which the train was to return. Mr. Alderman Boyce, Deputy-Chairman of the Board, took the chair ; and, after the cloth had been withdrawn and the usual toasts given, the Chairman said, as their time was short, he would briefly state that the apparent stability of the works and the general arrangements gave him the greatest satisfaction ; and that, as the gentlemen present had full opportunity of examining them likewise, he would give in a bumper, "Prosperity to the Midland Great Western Railway." The next toast he would propose (said the Chairman) was one in which they would all concur. He had not time to go into the merits of the gentleman whose health he was about to propose, and would, therefore, at once give, "Mr. Hemans, their Engineer-in-chief." This toast was heartily responded to. Mr. Hemans modestly and briefly returned thanks for the manner in which his health had been drunk. In the course of his remarks he said, it had been alleged that the laying down of a railway on the banks of the canal would never answer, because the banks would give way ; but they had that day proved that such an opinion was erroneous, for they had now a line laid down close by the bank of the Royal Canal, and they had all witnessed the stability with which it was constructed—a stability which he had every confidence would be permanent. The health of the "Permanent-way Contractor" was then drunk, and responded to ; after which several of the party made some excellent remarks as to the benefit that would accrue to the country through which this line was destined to go. Mr. Hemans then intimated that the time had arrived at which he had ordered the train to be in readiness for their return to Dublin. On arriving at the station, a singular circumstance took place. From forty to fifty "spalpeens," as they were styled, made application, through one of the officials, to be taken down to Dublin with the train free. The Deputy-Chairman and Directors immediately complied with their request, and a third-class carriage was attached to the train, when all got in. The train reached Dublin, without stopping, at a speed of from 30 to 35 miles an hour, rounding all the sharp curves with the greatest ease possible, every person being perfectly delighted with the journey.

One grand principle has been adhered to in the construction of this line, namely, strict economy. No useless and gingerbread decorations have been allowed. The bridges are of the most substantial description, being all built of hard blue stone, and of such width that there is no risk of a person losing his head by looking out of a carriage window, as has been the case with some of the English bridges. I traversed this line a great number of times, and walked over a considerable portion of it, in a variety of places ; and I cannot but bear testimony that, for stability of construction, I have never seen it surpassed, although the curves are more than ordinarily sharp, and there is a great number of



them, in consequence of following the course of the canal. Mr. Hemans has so carefully secured and bound the rails, that it is absolutely impossible for them to get out of gauge; and where he had any doubt as to the bank, he has so effectually secured it, that I feel confident it is by far more safe than our high embankments are when first passed over. There is no risk of having a slip, as always occurs, even on old lines, when a season of wet weather sets in.

I think the Directors have been rather premature in opening the line, but for one reason only, and that is, before they had more locomotive power. They have, however, the advantage of a very able and indefatigable Locomotive Superintendent in Mr. Deurance. If some of their neighbours had had such a one, the Directors would not have been obliged to stop the line until more power had been obtained. When additional power does arrive from England, and on the completion of Mr. Deurance's arrangements, which, I have no doubt, will be in a couple of months, the locomotive expense of this line will be under that of any other in Ireland, or even in England.

Having said thus much as to this new line, allow me to offer a remark or two upon the station arrangements at the two extremes. Mr. Wm. H. Sallas, considering the very short time, has put his department into almost perfect order. The experience he obtained by his long residence on the Midland Railway (England), fully entitles him to the confidence of the Directors. The energy, attention, and suavity of manner he displays, cannot but obtain for him the goodwill of the Irish public. Again, at the Enfield station, they have a long-trying and praiseworthy servant. A more fitting person for the duty devolving upon him, the Directors could not have fixed upon. During his nine years' experience, as a railway official, no complaint, public or private, was ever known to be brought against him. The Great Southern and Western Company lost, truly, a faithful and able servant when they allowed him to depart, in consequence of the proceedings of a Dowling.

Before I leave this line, I must congratulate the proprietary upon the energy and zeal which their Deputy-Chairman (Alderman Boyce) displays for the welfare of the concern. He does not content himself with merely visiting the Dublin station, going out of one office into another—he traverses the line throughout; and, whenever I was there, I always found him on one portion of the line or another. If the property were exclusively his own, he could not bestow more attention upon it. With such a Direction, Engineer, and officials, this line will, in a short time, be a pattern, not only to Ireland, but to some of the first Companies in England.

With regard to the Great Southern and Western Railway, no improvement has taken place in its locomotive management since my visit in February. Mr. Colville has, as yet, failed in his Taff Vale clock-work system. While Mr. Deurance was there, Mr. Colville continually kept ringing in the ears of the Directors that, so long as Mr. Deurance remained, Bury's engines would not do the work properly, as Mr. Deurance was so prejudiced against them. Pray, how much better are they now? It is now two months since Mr. Colville has had them completely under his own care; for Mr. Miller (I am sorry to say) is

quite a nonentity under Mr. Colville. Bury's engines, on many occasions, are now consuming from 15 to 20 lbs. per mile more coke than Sharp's. Two of them, while I was there, were using as much as from 40 to 45 lbs. per mile. Surely, Mr. Deurance cannot be blamed for this! In the course of another two or three months, I shall be able to make a comparison between the Great Southern and the Mullingar lines as to locomotive charges; and Mr. Colville will have this advantage, that Mr. Deurance has a very curved line all the way, and consequently, has much extra friction to contend with. Mr. Miller certainly promises great things; but whether Mr. Colville will allow him to carry them out, is a different matter. Mr. Colville falls upon many stratagems to carry his point. If a change does not come over the Directory, they will ultimately get severely punished. They made a beginning the other week, to the tune of several hundreds of pounds.

The station arrangements of the Great Southern and Western are not one whit improved. The same hunting party who crawled out of the carriage windows (as I noticed on a former occasion) a few weeks ago, had all but just resorted to the same expedient again. One gentleman was half out, when a porter pushed him back, telling him the keys would be there directly. Surely this Board must be very inactive or inefficient!

The Kingstown Railway continues to be conducted in its usual perfect and regular manner in all its departments. In a particular manner, Mr. Rollands deserves credit for his locomotives; and, as to the permanent way, I never saw a line in such order.

The Drogheda Railway, in its locomotive arrangements, is very excellent. It does credit to Mr. Lees; but I must condemn the manner in which the permanent way of this line is kept. One would think there were no Directors at all, although they are almost as numerous as bees in a bee-hive! The Chairman should take a step across the Liffey and visit the Kingstown line. It would cost him only a half-penny, and there he would see how to keep a line in repair, and, at the same time, save money.

It is rumoured that Captain Coddington is to resign his Inspector-Generalship of Railways; and I cannot refrain from once more calling the attention of the Railway Commissioners, and likewise the Executive, to the new appointment, and the paramount necessity of making a radical change in the system of inspection. I have times out of number reverted to this, and shown that if a continually travelling inspector had been appointed four years ago, as I suggested, not one of the fatal train accidents which I have recorded in your paper would have taken place. A careful perusal of my letters, which are on the eve of publication in a collected form, will clearly prove this. Just let me show you, how the three late accidents would have been prevented. 1st. The travelling inspector would have known of the commotion at Brighton; and he would have repaired there, and put a stop to Gregory having charge of a passenger-train until he had had more experience. He would also have prevented engines which were out of repair from running passenger-trains, particularly No. 40. 2nd. In his travels it would have been his duty to know how all the level crossings were attended to (how much blood has not

been shed at those places!), and particularly what sort of men were placed at important points. This constant inquiry and examining for himself besides, would have been a sufficient check on unjust removals on the Birmingham line and injudicious appointments. 3rd. Mr. M'Connell would not have dared to go against the Inspector's instructions, and removed an experienced driver to make room for an inexperienced favourite. Is it not notorious that neither Inspectors-General, Board of Trade Commissioners, the Government, or even Parliament, have ever troubled themselves to prevent the sacrifice of human life; while, at the same time, so much has been written, that a simple method, if applied, would have the desired effect, and at much less cost to the public, than all the expensive inquiries after the deed is done? What is more astonishing is, that not one of the multitude of inquiries has induced even the suggestion of an amendment. Surely, we have had sacrifices enough, and the time has arrived for at least an improvement in our inspection. It must be resorted to sooner or later.

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*\* \* These Letters will be continued from time to time  
in the RAILWAY RECORD.*

*VERITAS VINCIT.*

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