

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, 1st February 1861.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you, for the consideration of the directors of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company, the enclosed copy of the report made by Captain Tyler, R.E., the officer appointed by their Lordships to inquire into the circumstances which attended the collision that occurred on the 20th ultimo at the Kirkdale Junction on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

I am, &c.

JAMES BOOTH.

*The Secretary of the
Lancashire and Yorkshire
Railway Company.*

SIR,

Chester, 30th January 1861.

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 22d instant, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the accident, that occurred on the 20th instant, at the Kirkdale Junction of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

This junction is rather more than a mile and three quarters to the north of the Exchange Station at Liverpool, is 600 yards to the north of the station at Sandhills, and is at the north end of the Sandhills goods-yard. There are four lines of rails to the junction to accommodate the traffic, a portion of which branches off at this point to Southport; and the means of connection between the main lines and the sidings in the goods-yard are of a complicated nature. There are two pointsmen's cabins, besides that of the signalman. One of these is opposite to the stage from which the signals are worked; and the other, to the south of it, and further removed from the main line, has acquired the name of the "Glory Hole" cabin.

It had not been the practice to keep a pointsman at this last-named cabin on Sunday, the traffic in the goods-yard being much less considerable on that day than on other days, and the points which are worked from it belonging, with one exception, to the sidings only; but the "inspector" (of the shunting) was in the habit of attending to these points, when it was necessary to work them on that day.

On Sunday the 20th instant, two goods trains arrived at Kirkdale at 5.50 p.m., on different lines of rails, from Liverpool; one from the Great Howard Street Station, and the other from the North Docks. The waggons of the latter train were all for Bootle Lane, which is a mile to the north of the Kirkdale Junction, whilst those of the former were, 9 of them, for the Sandhills goods yard.

The pointsman therefore sent forward the North Docks train at once to Bootle Lane, that it might get through its shunting there at the same time that the other train was shunting at Sandhills; and, in order that it might thus be the sooner out of the way of the other train, which would follow it to Bootle Lane, after leaving its waggons in the Sandhills goods-yard, the shunting inspector, who would otherwise have taken charge of the points at the "Glory Hole" cabin, went forward with the North Docks train to Bootle Lane, to superintend the shunting at that station.

The train that remained at the junction, contained 26 waggons, loaded with cotton and other goods, and was accompanied by two guards. As soon as it came to a stand, near the junction box, the head guard uncoupled the 9 waggons which were next behind the

tender, from the remainder; and the engine proceeded forward with those waggons, and took them from the main line to a line on the left of it, called No. 1 line. The points between these two lines were held by the second pointsman, Molyneux, who remained at them, to work them again on the return of the engine. The first pointsman, Holland, stationed himself, at the request of the guard of the train, at another pair of points, to turn the waggons, as they were pushed back by the engine, from No. 1 line to the departure line from Sandhills for Southport. It was necessary that they should pass over this line, on their way to the siding for which they were destined, called the Sheffield siding. There was no other person then left to hold the points leading from the Southport departure line to this siding, than one of the guards of the train. These points were worked from the "Glory Hole" cabin, and the head-guard inquired from that cabin, when he first reached it, for the "inspector." On being informed that that officer had gone to Bootle Lane with the other train, he determined to do without him; and, taking the under-guard to the handle of the points referred to, which was at some little distance from the points themselves, he instructed him to "work" it for the waggons to pass through.

This under-guard had been a guard for 3 months, and in the company's service for 2½ years; but it was his first trip with that *pilot* train, and he was totally unacquainted with the working of the points in the Sandhills yard. He believed at the time, and still believes, that he held the handle in the proper direction, and acted according to his instructions; but it is quite clear that he was mistaken, and that he opened the points for the Southport departure line, instead of for the Sheffield siding, because the engine and waggons ran upon that line, and remained upon it, and did not go into the siding.

A very thick fog prevailed at the time, and the under-guard was unable to see the waggons as they passed near him, besides which it was a difficult matter to distinguish one line from another. It was believed by all present that the waggons had been put into the siding for which they were intended. The head-guard uncoupled the engine from them, and, directing the under-guard to pin down the breaks of two of them, took the engine forward to the remainder of the train, which was still standing on the main line on which it had arrived. The under-guard went down to the siding, and pinned down two breaks, which appear to have belonged to some waggons other than those which he had brought from Liverpool; and it is to be supposed, that the 9 waggons referred to were left on the Southport departure line, without having had any of their breaks pinned down at all. The two guards then proceeded forward with their train to Bootle Lane, believing that all was as it should be; the pointsman trusted to the head-guard, who was an experienced man, and well acquainted with the goods-yard; and the 9 waggons were left unattended, without breaks, in a thick fog, upon the Southport main line, and upon a gradient falling towards Liverpool, without any one having an idea that they were in this dangerous situation.

They were not long, however, to remain undisturbed. The 6.10 p.m. passenger train from Liverpool to Crosby, consisting of an engine and tender, four first-class, two second-class, and one third-class carriages, and a guard's van, started punctually from the Exchange Station at Liverpool. It stopped at Sandhills, as it was timed to do, and left that station all right. The driver whistled 3 times, according to custom, for the distant signal from the Kirkdale Junc-

tion, as he approached it ; and that signal was lowered for him to pass. He proceeded forward at a speed of 10 or 12 miles an hour, but had not gone more than 100 yards further when he saw, through the fog, the waggons in question, about 10 yards in front of him. He shut off his steam, and blew his whistle, but was of course unable to do anything towards arresting the progress of his train before a collision occurred. His engine was not damaged, nor were any of his vehicles thrown off the line. One of the goods waggons, the second from the front, left the rails with two of its wheels ; and 3 of the passengers, out of about 20 who were travelling by the train, were slightly injured. It was no doubt fortunate, under the circumstances, that the guard of the goods train did not pin down the breaks of his own waggons.

In looking for the causes of this accident, it is evident, that it was directly occasioned by the mistake of the under-guard, who, unacquainted with the working of the points at the handle of which he was placed, turned the waggons in the wrong direction, and placed them in the way of the passenger train, instead of depositing them in the siding for which they were destined. It was indirectly brought about, also, by the fog, which prevented the head-guard from seeing that the mistake had been made, and the necessity that existed for immediately rectifying it. But it is to be observed, at the same time, that it would not have occurred if there had been a regular pointsman at the "Glory Hole" Cabin, as there ought to have been, if the shunting inspector was liable to

be called away, and if these sidings were liable to be used in his absence. The head-guard might, it is true, have worked the points himself, instead of entrusting them to the under-guard, and have sent the latter to give directions to the driver to unhook the engine from the waggons, and to see that the proper waggons were put into the sidings ; but I cannot blame this man, who appears to have acted for the best under the circumstances, and who could not have foreseen the mistake that the under-guard was about to make.

With a view to the prevention of accidents in the neighbourhood of this junction in future, it is desirable that the connections between the main lines and the sidings should be thoroughly well considered, should be re-arranged, and should be materially improved ; and, either that the particular points in question should be transferred from the Southport departure-line to the siding-line near it, or else that they should be worked from the junction-box, and be placed thus under the charge of the signalman. That man cannot, of course, be responsible for their working, or be able to regulate his signals in all cases by the state of the Southport down line, unless they are worked by a lever from his own stage, or, in other words, while they can be worked without his knowledge by the pointsman at the "Glory Hole" Cabin.

I have, &c.

*The Secretary of the
Railway Department,
Board of Trade.*

H. W. TYLER,
Capt. R.F.

LONDON, CHATHAM, AND DOVER RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
6 March, 1861.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you, for the information of the Directors of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway Company, the enclosed copy of the report made by Captain Tyler, R.E., the officer appointed by my Lords to inquire into the circumstances which attended the accident to a passenger train on the 4th January near the Sittingbourne Station.

I have, &c.

JAMES BOOTH.

*The Secretary of the
London, Chatham and Dover
Railway Company.*

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,
Whitehall, 6th February 1861.*

SIR,

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 9th ultimo, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the accident, that occurred on the 4th ultimo, near the Sittingbourne Station of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway.

The 9.55 a.m. passenger train for Canterbury, left the Victoria Station in London in due course on that day, consisting of an engine and tender, six carriages, and two break-vans, one in the front, and the other in the rear of the passenger carriages. It stopped at the Crystal Palace, Bromley, St. Mary's Cray, Farningham, Strood, and Chatham ; and it left the last-mentioned station at 11.35, twenty-six minutes late, for Sittingbourne. It was approaching a bridge over the railway, about 45½ miles from London, called the Bobbing Bridge, on a falling gradient of 1 in 110, at a speed stated to have been thirty miles an hour, when the guard in the leading van heard what he describes as a loud explosion under him, like a gun going off ; and he then felt his van jump, and found the ballast flying under it. The flooring of his van was also damaged by something thrown violently against it from below, and its wheels left the rails.

He immediately shouted to the driver and fireman, who were on the engine before him ; but he was unable to attract their attention until he had travelled about 180 yards further. At the end of that distance he succeeded in making the fireman hear, by means of his whistle, as he passed the gateway of a level crossing. The fireman happened at the moment to be turning round to get hold of the handle of the tender-break, and, hearing the guard whistle, and seeing the break-van jumping, he called to the driver to "hold on."

The driver had shut off his steam at the summit of the incline, about three quarters of a mile from the spot at which he received this warning, in order that he might run down with due caution towards the Sheerness Junction ; and he believes that he had slackened speed from 30 to 25 miles an hour, after shutting off his steam, before the condition of the van was pointed out to him by his fireman. He states that he left Chatham at 11.37 by his watch, and that the accident occurred, also by his watch, at 12 o'clock. The distance between Chatham and the site of the accident being 9½ miles, the average speed of the train, after it started from Chatham, would thus appear to have been 25 miles an hour.

On first looking back to see what was the matter, the driver observed that the leading axle of the van was drooping on its right side. He saw that if he pulled up too suddenly he should occasion great risk to the passengers, by causing the carriages to run forward on the disabled van ; and he therefore brought his train cautiously to a stand, at about a third of a mile, or rather more, from the Bobbing Bridge over the railway.

An inspector of the permanent way happened to be standing on the up-line, on a bridge under the railway, at the spot where the train was thus stopped. He heard it approaching him, and noticed that the sound was different from that which the trains usually occasioned. Turning round to look at it, he saw a carriage in the act of falling over on its side ; and he watched it, as it slid along on the right, or inside rail, for what he considered to be about 100 yards, up to the bridge where he was standing.