

steadiest class, was travelling at high speed, though not so as to cause any risk apparently of bursting a sound permanent way. It came upon a weak portion of the road before it reached the Carr Lane level crossing, where the fastenings of three chairs gave way. It thus acquired some additional oscillation, and it reached, 55 yards further in advance, another weak portion of line, before it recovered itself. The fastenings again gave way; the engine and the whole train left the rails; and the results followed which I above described.

This is a class of accident on which I have of late years had very frequently to report. By far the greater number of accidents that have arisen from defects of permanent way have been caused, as in this case, by the failure of trenail fastenings; and

accidents will no doubt continue to occur from the same cause as long as this description of fastening is allowed to remain, particularly in old roads. I would take this opportunity of strongly recommending the Directors of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company to cause an iron spike to be inserted in every trenail that now remains on their line; and it is most important that the same measures should be adopted on all other lines in the kingdom on which trenail fastenings still continue to be employed.

I have, &c.

H. W. TYLER,

Capt. R.E.

To The Secretary  
Railway Department,  
Board of Trade.

## LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade  
(Railway Department),  
Whitehall, 12th July 1864.

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, to transmit to you to be laid before 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 my Lords to enquire into the circumstances connected with the collision which occurred at the Bamber Bridge station on the 21st ultimo.

I am, &c.

JAMES BOOTH.

The Secretary of the  
Lancashire and Yorkshire  
Railway Company.

SIR,

Chester, 6th July 1864.

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 27th 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 21st ultimo, near Bamber Bridge, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

This station is a few miles to the south of Preston, and a quarter of a mile to the east of the Bamber Bridge Junction, at which the lines from Liverpool and Blackburn meet.

As the 4.5 p.m. passenger train from Preston to Blackburn was approaching it in due course, about 4.20 on the afternoon in question, the engine-driver suddenly saw a goods engine which had been shunting on the down line cross over towards the up line, on which he was travelling. The passenger train consisted of an engine and tender, two first-class and two second-class carriages, and two break vans, in charge of two guards. Each carriage was provided with a break, there having been two sets of Newall's continuous breaks in the train. It was drawing up to stop at the station, and was proceeding at a speed of about 10 miles an hour, when the goods engine thus approached it along a cross-over road the furthest extremity of which is 120 yards from the station platforms.

The two engines met with some degree of violence, and the goods engine was thrown off the rails, though not clear of the up line. The sides of the four first carriages of the passenger train struck it in succession, and these carriages were also thrown off the rails, and were more or less damaged, a pair of wheels having been forced from under one of them. Only two passengers appear fortunately to have suffered from the effects of the collision.

The coal train to which the goods engine had been attached left Ormskirk punctually at 2.55 for Bamber Bridge and intermediate stations, and reached Bamber Bridge about 4.20, consisting of an engine and tender, five loaded waggons, and a break-van. The engine was

intended, after depositing the loaded waggons in the goods yard, to return with empty waggons to Ormskirk.

As soon as this train reached Bamber Bridge, it was shunted from the up to the down line, along the cross-over road previously referred to. The goods sidings, three in number, are all on the south or down side, and are connected with the down line by a pair of points about 40 yards further from the station than the points leading to the cross-over road, and with each other by two other pairs of points on the station side of the main line points. The loaded waggons were ultimately to be placed in No. 3 siding, furthest from the main lines; but they could not be turned at once into that siding, because it was occupied by the empty waggons which were to return to Ormskirk; and the guard determined, therefore, to turn them first into No. 1 siding, nearest to the main line. As the most convenient mode of effecting this, and of disengaging the engine from the front of the waggons, he adopted the operation called fly-shunting. He caused the engine to run at sufficient speed towards the points leading to the siding (which now became facing points), and therefore, also, towards those of the cross-over road; and, sitting at the back of the tender, he uncoupled the waggons from it by hand, as the engine driver shut off steam, and the engine temporarily slackened speed, at the proper moment. The engine-driver then turned on his steam again, and a goods porter, who stood at the siding points, after allowing the engine to run through on the down line, turned the waggons into the sidings; and the guard himself, jumping down from the tender, and running across in front of the waggons, turned them as they passed him through the proper points into the front siding.

The goods engine would thus have passed the cross-over road points safely, and would have proceeded along the down line without getting in the way of the passenger train, if it had not been for the interference of a foreman platelayer who happened to be standing close to the lever by which those points were worked. This man had been putting in a new crossing, and had just completed his work. He was about to leave the spot to go over his "own length," which was on the other side of the Preston Junction, when he heard, or believes that he heard, some one say, "Turn them across." He has no idea from whom this instruction came, but he pushed the lever of the cross-over road points over, and turned the goods engine across to the up line as the passenger train was approaching; and he thus caused the collision which I have described. He was not aware that the passenger train was coming up, and the goods engine and coal waggons, which were between him and that train, would no doubt have obscured it from his view.

There is no doubt that this foreman platelayer, Jeremiah Hodgson, who had been for 18 years on the same section of railway, and was for 12 years pre-

viously on the line between Bolton and Leigh, acted with the best intentions; and it appears that he must in some way have misunderstood what was said by the goods guard to another platelayer, Culshaw. Culshaw had seized another pair of points as the coal waggons approached him, which led into the *back* or No. 3 siding, because he believed that to be the proper siding for the waggons. The guard shouted to him to let go of those points, as he wanted the waggons to go into the front road; and Hodgson thereupon turned the goods engine across towards the up line. The guard imagined that Hodgson had mistaken the cross-over road points for the points leading to the front siding; but Hodgson asserts positively that he purposely turned the engine across in carrying out an instruction to that effect which he believed himself to have received.

This accident then was the immediate result of a pure mistake. But it was also the result of an unsafe mode of working, carried on in direct disobedience to a special order of the Company. I enclose copy of a printed notice which was addressed in February 1859, and which is stated to have been since re-issued, to "station-masters, engine-drivers, goods-guards, and others." In that notice the practice of making "flying shunts" by suddenly detaching the engine from the waggons, and turning the engine upon one line and the waggons upon another while all are in

motion, is stated, as will be observed, to be "attended with very great risk to life and property," and it is not to "be allowed under any circumstances." It is also added that any person disobeying that order "will subject himself to severe punishment." That order could hardly be made stronger, or be more plainly expressed, but the system so forbidden has nevertheless been commonly carried on at the Bamber Bridge Station.

It is desirable, not only that fly-shunting should be given up, but also that no shunting at all should be carried on upon the down line while a train is due or approaching on the up line, as long as the points leading to the cross-over road are in their present position; and unnecessary delay might be prevented by the use of the electric telegraph. That auxiliary to safety has not yet been supplied at Bamber Bridge any more than main (or platform) signals. The passenger platforms, too, are low and narrow, and the station accommodation is altogether of a very inferior description.

I am glad to learn that the Company contemplate a very considerable expenditure with a view to its improvement.

I have, &c.

*The Secretary of the  
Board of Trade,  
Whitehall.*

H. W. TYLER,  
Capt. R.E.

## LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade  
(Railway Department),  
Whitehall, 9th July 1864.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, to transmit to you, to be laid before the directors of the London and North-Western Railway Company, the enclosed copy of the report made by Captain Rich, R.E., the officer appointed by my Lords to inquire into the circumstances connected with the collision which occurred at Muspratt Sidings, near Runcorn Gap, on the 27th May last.

I am, &c.

JAMES BOOTH.

*The Secretary of the  
London and North-Western  
Railway Company.*

*Edinburgh Hotel,  
Edinburgh, 27th June, 1864.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, that, in compliance with your instructions of the 11th inst., I have inquired into the circumstances that attended the collision that occurred on the 27th ultimo at Muspratt Sidings, near Runcorn Gap, on the London and North-Western Railway.

The 10.30 a.m. goods train, consisting of an engine, tender, and 25 waggons, left Garston for Manchester about 35 minutes late. She arrived at Muspratt sidings at 11.45 a.m. instead of 11.10 a.m., the time appointed, and was brought to a stand, the last waggon of the train being near the junction distant signal for the down line, adjacent to the Muspratt signalman's box. The signalman, whose duty it was to attend the signals and points for the sidings, was absent from his post. Ten waggons had to be taken out of the sidings, and others shunted. The breaksman of the goods train, after unhooking the engine and some of the waggons, desired the driver to go ahead. He and the fireman held the points for the driver to go into the sidings. The shunting occupied about 40 minutes, and there appears to have been some delay in this work, in consequence of the absence of the signalman and the breaksman not being pleased at having to do the signalman's work. The sidings are protected by an ordinary distant signal to the eastward and by the signals of Widnes Junction to the westward. Widnes

Junction is about 200 yards from the sidings, and the signalman at the sidings communicates with the man at the junction by means of a bell with tell-tale attached.

The lever handle of the bell is inside the signalman's box at the sidings and the bell and tell-tale are inside the junction box at Widnes, so that the signalman at the sidings cannot be certain that the bell has rung, or if rung that the junction man has taken note of it.

When the goods train pulled up at Muspratt sidings on the 27th ultimo, no bell was rung, as the signalman was absent, and the breaksman of the train, who should have done it when he found the signalman away, states, that he did not understand how to work it, but he admits that he knew that the bell was worked inside the signalman's box, and he has been acting as breaksman on that part of the line for eight months.

It appears, moreover, that he remained for about 15 minutes after the goods train had stopped doing nothing, and took no measures of any kind to protect his train, although Widnes Junction box was within 200 yards.

It is doubtful whether the signalman at Widnes Junction could see the tail of the goods train in the position she stood on the down line. Isaac Jones, who was on duty at the junction, is a servant of the St. Helen's Railway Company, has been 12 years in their employment, and appears a good man. He states that some high waggons were on the siding adjacent to the goods train, which intercepted the view from his box, particularly as the last waggon of the goods train was a low goods waggon with a break, and not the ordinary guard's van, but he was aware that the goods train was timed to stop at the sidings, and though he stated that it did not always do so, it appears that it has only passed twice without stopping during the last year, and that the driver was reported in both instances for so doing. It appears to me that when he found that the ordinary bell signal was not given on the arrival of the goods train, he should have satisfied himself that she was not standing on the down line as usual.

If he could not do this from the outer edge of his platform, he could easily do so by stepping down on the line, and he had a lad in his box to assist him,