Fifty Years of Railway Life in England, Scotland and Ireland

By

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THE RAILWAY GAZETTE

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CONTENTS.

Chapter		Page
I.	Introductory	1
II.	Boyhood	4
III.	The Midland Railway and "King Hudson"	11
IV.	Fashions and Manners, Victorian Days	17
V.	Early Office Life	21
VI.	Friendship	28
VII.	Railway Progress	34
VIII.	Scotland, Glasgow Life, and the Caledonian Line	40
IX.	General Railway Acts of Parliament	48
X.	A General Manager and his Office	56
XI.	The Railway Jubilee, and Glasgow and South-Western Officers and Clerks	62
XII.	TOM...	70
XIII.	Men I met and Friends I made	73
XIV.	Terminals, Rates and Fares, and other Matters	81
XV.	Further Railway Legislation	87
XVI.	Belfast and the County Down Railway	90
XVII.	Belfast and the County Down (*continued*)	97

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Chapter		Page
XVIII.	Railway Rates and Charges, the Block, the Brake, and Light Railways	103
XIX.	Golf, the Diamond King, and a Steam-boat Service	110
XX.	The Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland	115
XXI.	Ballinasloe Fair, Galway, and Sir George Findlay	124
XXII.	A Railway Contest, the Parcel Post, and the Board of Trade	134
XXIII.	"The Railway News," the International Railway Congress, and a Trip to Spain and Portugal	141
XXIV.	Tom Robertson, more about Light Railways, and the Inland Transit of Cattle	148
XXV.	Railway Amalgamation and Constantinople	155
XXVI.	A Congress at Paris, the Progress of Irish Lines, Egypt and the Nile	166
XXVII.	King Edward, a Change of Chairmen, and more Railway Legislation	173
XXVIII.	Vice-Regal Commission on Irish Railways, 1906–1910, and the Future of Railways	178
XXIX.	The General Managers' Conference, Gooday's Dinner, and Divers Matters	190
XXX.	From Manager to Director	197
XXXI.	The Dominions' Royal Commission, the Railways of the Dominions, and Empire Development	200
XXXII.	Conclusion	215

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

The Author	*Frontispiece*	
George Hudson, the "Railway King"	*facing page*	12
Sir James Allport	,, ,,	34
W. J. Wainwright	,, ,,	60
Edward John Cotton	,, ,,	98
Walter Bailey	,, ,,	100
Sir Ralph Cusack, D. L.	,, ,,	118
William Dargan	,, ,,	124
The Dargan Saloon	,, ,,	126
Sir George Findlay	,, ,,	132
Sir Theodore Martin	,, ,,	162
The Gresham Salver	,, ,,	194

FIFTY YEARS OF RAILWAY LIFE

CHAPTER I

Introductory

North-West Donegal. A fine afternoon in September. The mountain ranges were bathed in sunshine and the scarred and seamy face of stern old Errigal seemed almost to smile. A gentle breeze stirred the air and the surface of the lakes lay shimmering in the soft autumnal light. The blue sky, flecked with white cloudlets, the purple of the heather, the dark hues of the bogs, the varied greens of bracken, ferns and grass, the gold of ripening grain, and the grey of the mountain boulders, together formed a harmony of colour which charmed the eye and soothed the mind.

I had been travelling most of the day by railway through this delightful country, not by an express that rushed you through the scenery with breathless haste, but by an easy-going mixed train which called at every station. Sometimes its speed reached twenty-five miles an hour, but never more, and because of numerous curves and gradients—for it was a narrow gauge and more or less a surface line—the rate of progress was much less during the greater part of the journey.

The work of the day was over. My companion and I had dined at the Gweedore Hotel, where we were staying for the night. With the setting

sun the breeze had died away. Perfect stillness and a silence deep, profound and all-pervading reigned. I had been talking, as an old pensioner *will* talk, of byegone times, of my experiences in a long railway career, and my companion, himself a rising railway man, seemed greatly interested. As we sauntered along, the conversation now and again lapsing into a companionable silence, he suddenly said: "Why don't you write your reminiscences? They would be very interesting, not only to us younger railway men, but to men of your own time too." Until that moment I had never seriously thought of putting my reminiscences on record, but my friend's words fell on favourable ground, and now, less than a month since that night in Donegal, I am sitting at my desk penning these opening lines.

That my undertaking will not be an easy one I know. My memory is well stored, but unfortunately I have never kept a diary or commonplace book of any kind. On the contrary a love of order and neatness, carried to absurd excess, has always led me to destroy accumulated letters or documents, and much that would be useful now has in the past, from time to time, been destroyed and "cast as rubbish to the void."

Most autobiographies, I suppose, are undertaken to please the writers. That this is the case with me I frankly confess; but I hope that what I find much pleasure in writing my readers may, at least, find some satisfaction in reading. Vanity, perhaps, plays some part in this hope, for, "He that is pleased with himself easily imagines that he shall please others."

Carlyle says, "A true delineation of the smallest man, and his scene of pilgrimage through life, is capable of interesting the greatest man; that all men are to an unspeakable degree brothers, each man's life a strange emblem of every man's; and that human portraits, faithfully drawn, are of all pictures the welcomest on human walls."

I am not sure that portraits of the artist by himself, though there are notable and noble instances to the contrary, are often successful. We rarely "see oursels as ithers see us," and are inclined to regard our virtues and our vices with equal equanimity, and to paint ourselves in too alluring colours; but I will do my best to tell my tale with strict veracity, and with all the modesty I can muster.

An autobiographer, too, exposes himself to the charge of egotism, but

I must run the risk of that, endeavouring to avoid the scathing criticism of him who wrote:—

> "*The egotist . . . . . .*
> *Whose I's and Me's are scattered in his talk,*
> *Thick as the pebbles on a gravel walk.*"

Fifty years of railway life, passed in the service of various companies, large and small, in England, Scotland and Ireland, in divers capacities, from junior clerk to general manager, and ultimately to the ease and dignity of director, if faithfully presented, may perhaps, in spite of all drawbacks, be not entirely devoid of interest.

CHAPTER II

Boyhood

I was born at Sheffield, on Good Friday, in the year 1851, and my only sister was born on a Christmas Day.

My father was in the service of the Midland Railway, as also were two of his brothers, one of whom was the father of the present General Manager of the Midland. When I was but ten months old my father was promoted to the position of accountants' inspector at headquarters and removed from Sheffield to Derby. Afterwards, whilst I was still very young, he became Goods Agent at Birmingham, and lived there for a few years. He then returned to Derby, where he became head of the Mineral Office. He remained with the Midland until 1897, when he retired on superannuation at the age of seventy-six. Except, therefore, for an interval of about three years my childhood and youth were spent at Derby.

My earliest recollection in connection with railways is my first railway journey, which took place when I was four years of age. I recollect it well. It was from Derby to Birmingham. How the wonder of it all impressed me! The huge engine, the wonderful carriages, the imposing guard, the busy porters and the bustling station. The engine, no doubt, was a pigmy, compared with the giants of to-day; the carriages were small, modest four-wheelers, with low roofs, and diminutive windows after the manner of old stage coaches, but to me they were palatial. I travelled first-class on a pass with my father, and great was my juvenile pride. Our luggage, I remember,

was carried on the roof of the carriage in the good old-fashioned coaching style. Four-wheeled railway carriages are, I was going to say, a thing of the past; but that is not so. Though gradually disappearing, many are running still, mainly on branch lines—in England nearly five thousand; in Scotland over four hundred; and in poor backward Ireland (where, by the way, railways are undeservedly abused) how many? Will it be believed—practically none, not more than twenty in the whole island! All but those twenty have been scrapped long ago. Well done Ireland!

From the earliest time I can remember, and until well-advanced in manhood, I was delicate in health, troubled with a constant cough, thin and pale. In consequence I was often absent from school; and prevented also from sharing, as I should, and as every child should, in out-door games and exercises, to my great disadvantage then and since, for proficiency is only gained by early training, and unfortunate is he whose circumstances have deprived him of that advantage. How often, since those early days, have I looked with envious eyes on pastimes in which I could not engage, or only engage with the consciousness of inferiority.

I have known men who, handicapped in this way, have in after life, by strong will and great application, overcome their disabilities and become good cricketers, great at tennis, proficient at golf, strong swimmers, skilful shots; but they have been exceptional men with a strong natural inclination to athletics.

The only active physical recreations in which I have engaged with any degree of pleasure are walking, riding, bicycling and skating. Riding I took to readily enough as soon as I was able to afford it; and, if my means had ever allowed indulgence in the splendid pastime of hunting, I would have followed the hounds, not, I believe, without some spirit and boldness. My natural disposition I know inclined me to sedentary pursuits: reading, writing, drawing, painting, though, happily, the tendency was corrected to some extent by a healthy love of Nature's fair features, and a great liking for country walks.

In drawing and painting, though I had a certain natural aptitude for both, I never attained much proficiency in either, partly for lack of instruction, partly from want of application, but more especially, I believe, because

another, more alluring, more mentally exciting occupation beguiled me. It was not music, though to music close allied. This new-found joy I long pursued in secret, afraid lest it should be discovered and despised as a folly. It was not until I lived in Scotland, where poetical taste and business talent thrive side by side, and where, as Mr. Spurgeon said, " no country in the world produced so many poets," that I became courageous, and ventured to avow my dear delight. It was there that I sought, with some success, publication in various papers and magazines of my attempts at versification, for versification it was that so possessed my fancy. Of the spacious times of great Elizabeth it has been written, " the power of action and the gift of song did not exclude each other," but in England, in mid-Victorian days, it was looked upon differently, or so at least I believed.

After a time I had the distinction of being included in a new edition of *Recent and Living Scottish Poets*, by Alexander Murdoch, published in 1883. My inclusion was explained on the ground that, " His muse first awoke to conscious effort on Scottish soil," which, though not quite in accordance with fact, was not so wide of the mark that I felt in the least concerned to criticise the statement. I was too much enamoured of the honour to question the foundation on which it rested. Perhaps it was as well deserved as are some others of this world's distinctions! At any rate it was neither begged nor bought, but came " Like Dian's kiss, unasked, unsought." In the same year (1883) I also appeared in *Edwards'* Sixth Series of *Modern Scottish Poets;* and in 1885, more legitimately, in William Andrews' book on *Modern Yorkshire Poets*. My claim for this latter distinction was not, however, any greater, if as great, as my right to inclusion in the collection of *Scottish Poets*. If I " lisped in numbers," it was not in Yorkshire, for Yorkshire I left for ever before even the first babblings of babyhood began. However, " kissing goes by favour," and I was happy in the favour I enjoyed.

I may as well say it here: with my poetical productions I was never satisfied any more than with my attempts at drawing. My verses seemed mere farthing dips compared with the resplendent poetry of our country which I read and loved, but my efforts employed and brightened many an hour in my youth that otherwise would have been tedious and dreary.

Ours was a large family, nine children in all; nothing unusual in those days. " A quiver full " was then a matter of parental pride. Woman was more satisfied with home life then than now. The pursuit of pleasure was not so keen. Our parents and our grandparents were simpler in their tastes, more easily amused, more readily impressed with the wonderful and the strange. Things that would leave us unmoved were to them matters of moment. Railways were new and railway travelling was, to most people, an event.

Our fathers talked of their last journey to London, their visit to the Tower, to Westminster Abbey, the Monument, Madame Tussauds; how they mistook the waxwork policeman for a real member of the force; how they shuddered in the *Chamber of Horrors;* how they travelled on the new Underground Railway; and saw the wonders of the Crystal Palace, especially on fireworks night. They told us of their visit to the *Great Eastern*, what a gigantic ship it was, what a marvel, and described its every feature. They talked of General Tom Thumb, of Blondin, of Pepper's Ghost, of the Christy Minstrels. Nowadays, a father will return from London and not even mention the Tubes to his children. Why should he? They know all about them and are surprised at nothing. The picture books and the cinemas have familiarised them with every aspect of modern life.

In those days our pleasures and our amusements were fewer, but impressed us more. I remember how eagerly the coloured pictures of the Christmas numbers of the pictorial papers were looked forward to, talked of, criticised, admired, framed and hung up. I remember too, the excitements of Saint Valentine's Day, Shrove Tuesday, April Fool's Day, May Day and the Morris (Molly) dancers; and the Fifth of November, Guy Fawkes Day. I remember also the peripatetic knife grinder and his trundling machine, the muffin man, the pedlar and his wares, the furmity wheat vendor, who trudged along with his welcome cry of " Frummitty ! " from door to door. Those were pleasant and innocent excitements. We have other things to engage us now, but I sometimes think all is not *gain* that the march of progress brings.

Young people then had fewer books to read, but read them thoroughly. What excitement and discussion attended the monthly instalments of

Dickens' novels in *All the Year Round*; how eagerly they were looked for. Lucky he or she who had heard the great *master* read himself in public. His books were read in our homes, often aloud to the family circle by paterfamilias, and moved us to laughter or tears. I never now see our young people, or their elders either, affected by an author as we were then by the power of Dickens. He was a new force and his pages kindled in our hearts a vivid feeling for the poor and their wrongs.

Scott's *Waverley Novels*, too, aroused our enthusiasm. In the early sixties a cheap edition appeared, and cheap editions were rare things then. It was published, if I remember aright, at two shillings per volume; an event that stirred the country. My father brought each volume home as it came out. I remember it well; a pale, creamy-coloured paper cover, good type, good paper. What treasures they were, and only two shillings! I was a little child when an important movement for the cheapening of books began. In 1852 Charles Dickens presided at a meeting of authors and others against the coercive regulations of the Booksellers' Association which maintained their excessive profits. Herbert Spencer and Miss Evans (George Eliot) took a prominent part in this meeting and drafted the resolutions which were passed. The ultimate effect of this meeting was that the question between the authors and the booksellers was referred to Lord Campbell as arbitrator. He gave a decision against the booksellers; and there were consequently abolished such of the trade regulations as had interdicted the sale of books at lower rates of profit than those authorised by the Booksellers' Association.

Practically all my school days were spent at Derby. As I have said, ours was a large family. I have referred to an only sister, but I had step-sisters and step-brothers too. My father married twice and the second family was numerous. His salary was never more than £300 a year, and though a prudent enough man, he was not of the frugal economical sort who makes the most of every shilling. It may be imagined, then, that all the income was needed for a family that, parents included, but excluding the one servant, numbered eleven. The consequence was that the education I received could not be described as liberal. I attended a day school at Derby, connected with the Wesleyans; why I do not know, as we belonged to the

Anglican Church; but I believe it was because the school, while cheap as to fees, had the reputation of giving a good, plain education suitable for boys destined for railway work. It was a good sized school of about a hundred boys. Not long ago I met one day in London a business man who, it turned out, was at this school with me. We had not met for fifty years. " Well," said he, " I think old Jessie, if he did not teach us a great variety of things, what he did he taught well." My new-found old schoolmate had become the financial manager of a great business house having ramifications throughout the world. He had attained to position and wealth and, which *successful* men sometimes are not, was quite unspoiled. We revived our schooldays with mutual pleasure, and lunched together as befitted the occasion.

" Jessie " was the name by which our old schoolmaster was endeared to his boys; a kindly, simple-minded, worthy man, teaching, as well as scholastic subjects, behaviour, morals, truth, loyalty; and these as much by example as by precept, impressing ever upon us the virtue of thoroughness in all we did and of truth in all we said. Since those days I have seen many youths, educated at much finer and more pretentious schools, who have benefited by modern educational methods, and on whose education much money has been expended, and who, when candidates for clerkships, have, in the simple matters of reading, writing, arithmetic, composition and spelling, shown up very poorly compared to what almost any boy from " old Jessie's " unambitious establishment would have done. But, plain and substantial as my schooling was, I have ever felt that I was defrauded of the better part of education—the classics, languages, literature and modern science, which furnish the mind and extend the boundaries of thought.

" Jessie " continued his interest in his boys long after they left school. He was proud of those who made their way. I remember well the warmth of his greeting and the kind look of his mild blue eyes when, after I had gone out into the world, I sometimes revisited him.

But my school life was not all happiness. In the school there was an almost brutal element of roughness, and fights were frequent; not only in our own, but between ours and neighbouring schools. Regular pitched battles were fought with sticks and staves and stones. I shrunk from fighting but could not escape it. Twice in our own playground I was forced to

fight. Every new boy had to do it, sooner or later. Fortunately on the second occasion I came off victor, much to my surprise. How I managed to beat my opponent I never could understand. Anyhow the victory gave me a better standing in the school, though it did not lessen in the least my hatred of the battles that raged periodically with other schools. I never had to fight again except as an unwilling participant in our foreign warfare.

CHAPTER III

The Midland Railway and "King Hudson"

In the year 1851 the Midland Railway was 521 miles long; it is now 2,063. Then its capital was £15,800,000, against £130,000,000 to-day. Then the gross revenue was £1,186,000 and now it has reached £15,960,000. When I say *now*, I refer to 1913, the year prior to the war, as since then, owing to Government control, non-division of through traffic and curtailment of accounts, the actual receipts earned by individual companies are not published, and, indeed, are not known.

Eighteen hundred and fifty-one was a period of anxiety to the Midland and to railway companies generally. Financial depression had succeeded a time of wild excitement, and the Midland dividend had fallen from seven to two per cent.! It was the year of the great Exhibition, which Lord Cholmondeley considered *the* event of modern times and many over sanguine people expected it to inaugurate a universal peace. On the other hand Carlyle uttered fierce denunciations against it. It certainly excited far more interest than has any exhibition since. Then, nothing of the kind had ever before been seen. Railway expectations ran high; immense traffic receipts, sorely needed, ought to have swelled the coffers of the companies. But no! vast numbers of people certainly travelled to London, but a mad competition, as foolish almost as the preceding *mania*, set in, and passenger fares were again and again reduced, till expected profits disappeared and loss and disappointment were the only result. The policy of Parliament in encouraging

the construction of rival railway routes and in fostering competition in the supposed interest of the public was, even in those early days, bearing fruit—dead sea fruit, as many a luckless holder of railway stock learned to his cost.

Railway shareholders throughout the kingdom were growing angry. In the case of the Midland—they appointed a committee of inquiry, and the directors assented to the appointment. This committee was to examine and report upon the general and financial conditions of the company, and was invested with large powers.

About the same time also interviews took place between the Midland and the London and North-Western, with the object of arranging an amalgamation of the two systems. Some progress was made, but no formal *engagement* resulted, and so a very desirable union, between an aristocratic bridegroom and a democratic bride, remained unaccomplished.

Mr. Ellis was chairman of the Midland at this time and Mr. George Carr Glyn, afterwards the first Lord Wolverton, occupied a similar position on the Board of the London and North-Western. Mr. Ellis had succeeded Mr. Hudson—the "*Railway King*," so christened by Sydney Smith. Mr. Hudson in 1844 was chairman of the first shareholders' meeting of the Midland Railway. Prior to that date the Midland consisted of three separate railways. In 1849 Mr. Hudson presided for the last time at a Midland meeting, and in the following year resigned his office of chairman of the company.

The story of the meteoric reign of the "*Railway King*" excited much interest when I was young, and it may not be out of place to touch upon some of the incidents of his career.

George Hudson was born in 1800, served his apprenticeship in the cathedral city of York and subsequently became a linendraper there and a man of property.

Many years afterwards he is reported to have said that the happiest days of his life passed while he stood behind his counter using the yardstick, a statement which should perhaps only be accepted under reservation. He was undoubtedly a man of a bold and adventurous spirit, possessed of an ambition which soared far above the measuring of calicoes or the retailing of ribbons; but perhaps the observation was tinged by the environment of later and less happy days when his star had set, his kingly reign come to an

GEORGE HUDSON

(After the portrait by Francis Grant, A.R.A.)

end, and when possibly vain regrets had embittered his existence. It was, I should imagine, midst the fierceness of the strife and fury of the *mania* times, when his powerful personality counted for so much, that he reached the zenith of his happiness.

Whilst conducting in York his linendraper business, a relation died and left him money. The railway boom had then begun. He flung his yard-stick behind him and entered the railway fray. The Liverpool and Manchester line and its wonderful success—it paid ten per cent.—greatly impressed the public mind, and the good people of York determined they would have a railway to London.

A committee was appointed to carry out the project. On this committee Mr. Hudson was placed, and it was mainly owing to his energy and skill that the scheme came to a successful issue. He was rewarded by being made chairman of the company.

This was his entrance into the railway world where, for a time, he was monarch. He must have been a man of shrewdness and capacity. It is recorded that he acquired the land for the York to London railway at an average cost of £1,750 per mile whilst that of the North Midland cost over £5,000.

On the 1st July, 1840, this linendraper of York had the proud pleasure of seeing the first train from York to London start on its journey.

From this achievement he advanced to others. He and his friends obtained the lease, for thirty-one years, of a rival line, which turned out a great financial success. His enterprise and energy were boundless.

It is said that his bold spirit, his capacity for work and his great influence daunted his most determined opponents. For instance, the North Midland railway, part predecessor of *the* Midland, was involved in difficulty. He appeared before the shareholders, offered, if his advice and methods were adopted, to guarantee double the then dividend. His offer was accepted and he was made chairman, and from that position became chairman, and for a time dictator, of the amalgamated Midland system. Clearly his business abilities were great; his reforms were bold and drastic, and success attended his efforts. He soon became the greatest railway authority in England. For a time the entire railway system in the north was under his

control, and the confidence reposed in him was unbounded. He was the lion of the day: princes, peers and prelates, capitalists and fine ladies sought his society, paid homage to his power, besought his advice and lavished upon him unstinted adulation.

In 1845 the railway mania was at its height. It is said that during two or three months of that year as much as £100,000 per week were expended in advertisements in connection with railway promotions, railway meetings and railway matters generally. Scarcely credible this, but so it is seriously stated. Huge sums were wasted in the promotion and construction of British railways in early days, from which, in their excessive capital cost, they suffer now. In the *mania* period railways sprang into existence so quickly that, to use the words of Robert Stephenson, they " appeared like the realisation of fabled powers or the magician's wand." The *Illustrated London News* of the day said: " Railway speculation has become the sole object of the world—cupidity is aroused and roguery shields itself under its name, as a more safe and rapid way of gaining its ends. Abroad, as well as at home, has it proved the rallying point of all rascality—the honest man is carried away by the current and becomes absorbed in the vortex; the timid, the quiet, the moral are, after some hesitation, caught in the whirlpool and follow those whom they have watched with pity and derision."

Powers were granted by Parliament in the year 1845 to construct no less than 2,883 miles of new railway at an expenditure of about £44,000,000; and in the next year (1846) applications were made to Parliament for authority to raise £389,000,000 for the construction of further lines. These powers were granted to the extent of 4,790 miles at a cost of about £120,000,000.

Soon there came a change; disaster followed success; securities fell; dividends diminished or disappeared altogether or, as was in some cases discovered, were paid out of capital, and disappointment and ruin followed. King Hudson's methods came under a fierce fire of criticism; adulation was succeeded by abuse and he was disgraced and dethroned. A writer of the day said, " Mr. Hudson is neither better nor worse than the morality of his time." From affluence he came to want, and in his old age a fund was raised sufficient to purchase him an annuity of £600 a year.

About this time, that most useful Institution the Railway Clearing House received Parliamentary sanction. *The Railway Clearing System Act* 1850 gave it statutory recognition. Its functions have been defined thus: "To settle and adjust the receipts arising from railway traffic within, or partly within, the United Kingdom, and passing over more than one railway within the United Kingdom, booked or invoiced at throughout rates of fares." The system had then been in existence, in a more or less informal way, for about eight years. Mr. Allport, on one occasion, said that whilst he was with the Birmingham and Derby railway (before he became general manager of the Midland) the process of settlement of receipts for through traffic was tedious and difficult, and it occurred to him that a system should be adopted similar to that which existed in London and was known as the Bankers' Clearing House. It was also said that Mr. Kenneth Morrison, Auditor of the London and Birmingham line, was the first to see and proclaim the necessity for a Clearing House. Be that as it may, the Railway Clearing House, as a practical entity, came into being in 1842. In the beginning it only embraced nine companies, and six people were enough to do its work. The companies were:—

> London and Birmingham, Midland Counties, Birmingham and Derby, North Midland, Leeds and Selby, York and North Midland, Hull and Selby, Great North of England, Manchester and Leeds.

Not one of these has preserved its original name. All have been merged in either the London and North-Western, the North-Eastern, the Midland or the Lancashire and Yorkshire.

At the present day the Clearing House consists of practically the whole of the railway companies in the United Kingdom, though some of the small and unimportant lines are outside its sphere. Ireland has a Railway Clearing House of its own—established in the year 1848—to which practically all Irish railway companies, and they are numerous, belong; and the six principal Irish railways are members of the London Clearing House.

The English house, situated in Seymour Street, Euston Square, is an extensive establishment, and accommodates 2,500 clerks. As I write, the number under its roof is, by war conditions, reduced to about 900. Serving with His Majesty's Forces are nearly 1,200, and about 400 have been tem-

porarily transferred to the railway companies, to the Government service and to munition factories.

In 1842, when the Clearing House first began, the staff, as I have said, numbered six, and the companies nine. Fifty-eight railway companies now belong to the House, and the amount of money dealt with by way of division and apportionment in the year before the war was £31,071,910. In 1842 it was £193,246.

CHAPTER IV

Fashions and Manners, Victorian Days

The boy who is strong and healthy, overflowing with animal spirits, enjoys life in a way that is denied to his slighter-framed, more delicate brother. Exercise imparts to him a physical exuberance to which the other is a stranger. But Nature is kind. If she withholds her gifts in one direction she bestows them in another. She grants the enjoyment of sedentary pursuits to those to whom she has denied hardier pleasures.

During my schooldays I spent many happy hours alone with book or pen or pencil. My father was fond of reading, and for a man of his limited means, possessed a good collection of books; a considerable number of the *volumes of Bohn's Standard Library* as well as *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, *Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy*, *Butler's Hudibras*, *Bailey's Festus*, *Gil Blas*, *Don Quixote*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, the *Arabian Nights*, *Shakespeare*, most of the poets from *Chaucer* down; and of novels, *Bulwer Lytton's*, *Scott's*, *Dickens'* and *Thackeray's*. These are the books I best remember, but there were others of classic fame, and I read them all; but not, I fear to much advantage, for though I have read many books it has been without much method, just as fancy led, and study, memory and judgment have been little considered. Still, unsystematic reading is better than no reading, and, as someone has said, " a phrase may fructify if it falls on receptive soil."

I never in my boyhood or youth, except on short visits to relatives, enjoyed the advantage, by living in the country, of becoming intimate with rural life. We resided at Derby in a terrace on the outskirt of the town, much to my dislike, for monotonous rows of houses I have ever hated. One's home should be one's friend and possess some special feature of its own, even in its outward aspect, to love and remember. As George Eliot says: " We get the fonder of our houses if they have a physiognomy of their own, as our friends have."

In my schooldays, country walks, pursued as far as health and strength allowed, were my greatest pleasure, sometimes taken alone, sometimes with a companion. The quiet valley of the Trent at Repton, Anchor Church, Knoll Hills, the long bridge at Swarkestone, the charming little country town of Melbourne, the wooded beauties of Duffield and Belper, the ozier beds of Spondon; how often have I trod their fields, their woods, their lanes, their paths; and how pleasantly the memory of it all comes back to me now!

In those days fashions and manners differed greatly from those of to-day. Ladies wore the crinoline (successor to the hoop of earlier times), chignons and other absurdities, but had not ventured upon short skirts or cigarettes. They were much given to blushing, now a lost art; and to swooning, a thing of the past; the " vapours " of the eighteenth century had, happily, vanished for ever; but athletic exercises, such as girls enjoy to-day, were then undreamed of. Why has the pretty art of blushing gone? One now never sees a blush to mantle on the cheek of beauty. Does the blood of feminine youth flow steadier than it did, or has the more unrestrained intercourse of the sexes banished the sweet consciousness that so often brought the crimson to a maiden's face? The manners of maidens had more of reserve and formality then. The off-hand style, the nod of the head, the casual " how d'ye do," were unknown. Woman has not now the same desire to appear always graceful; she adopts a manly gait, talks louder, plays hockey, rides horseback astride, and boldly enters hotel smoking rooms and railway smoking compartments without apology.

When walking with a lady, old or young, in those days, the gentleman would offer his arm and she would take it. The curtsey was still observed but gradually disappearing. When about nineteen years of age, I remember

being introduced to one of the young beauties of the town, who I had long secretly admired. She made me a profound and graceful curtsey—feminine homage to my budding manhood. The first curtsey I remember receiving, except of course in the stately ceremonies of the dance. For many a day afterwards my cheek glowed with pleasure at the recollection of that sweet obeisance. She became my sweetheart, temporarily; but a born butterfly, she soon fluttered away, leaving me disconsolate—*for a time!*

Women then wrote a sloping hand, delicate penmanship, to distinguish them from men; crossed and re-crossed their letters, and were greatly addicted to postscripts.

The men? Well, they wore mutton chop whiskers, or, if Nature was bountiful, affected the Dundreary style, which gave a man great distinction, and, if allied to good looks, made him perfectly irresistible. They wore " Champagne Charley " coats, fancy waistcoats, frilled-fronted shirts, relic of the lace and ruffles of Elizabeth's days; velvet smoking caps, embroidered slippers, elastic-side boots and chimney pot hats.

At eighteen years of age I had my first frock coat and tall hat. Some of my companions, happy youths! enjoyed this distinction at sixteen or seventeen. These adornments were of course for Sunday wear; no week-day clothes were worn on Sundays then. My frock coat was of West of England broadcloth, shiny and smooth. Sunday attire was incomplete without light kid gloves, lavender or lemon being the favourite shade for a young man with any pretension to style.

Next in importance to my first frock coat ranked my first portmanteau; it was a present, and supplanted the carpet bag which, up to then, to my profound disgust, I had to use on visits to my relatives. The portmanteau was the sign of youth and progress; old-fashioned people stuck to the carpet bag.

Man's attire has changed for the better; and woman's, with all its abbreviations and shortcomings, is, on the whole, more rational; though in the domain of Fashion her *vagaries* will last no doubt as long as—woman is woman; and if ever that shall cease to be, the charm of life will be over.

With man the jacket suit, the soft hat, the soft shirt, the turn-down collar, mark the transition from starch and stiffness to ease and comfort;

and Time in his course has brought no greater boon than this; except, perhaps, the change that marks our funeral customs. In those days, hat-bands, gloves and scarves were provided by the bereaved family to the relatives and friends who attended the obsequies; and all of kinship close or remote, were invited from far and near. Hearse and coaches and nodding plumes and mutes added to the expense, and many a family of moderate means suffered terrible privation from the costliness of these burial customs, which, happily, now are fast disappearing.

Beds, in those days, were warmed with copper warming pans, and nightcaps adorned the slumbering heads of both sexes. Spittoons were part of ordinary household furniture. To colour a meerschaum was the ambition of smokers, swearing was considered neither low nor vulgar, and snuffing was fashionable. Many most respectable men chewed tobacco, and to carry one's liquor well was a gentlemanly accomplishment.

Garrotters pursued their calling, deterred only by the cat-o'-nine tails, pickpockets abounded and burglaries were common.

The antimacassar and the family album; in what veneration they were held! The antimacassar, as its name implies, was designed to protect chairs and couches from the disfiguring stains of macassar oil, then liberally used in the adornment of the hair which received much attention. A parting, of geometrical precision, at the back of the head was often affected by men of dressy habits, who sometimes also wore a carefully arranged curl at the front; and manly locks, if luxuriant enough, were not infrequently permitted to fall in careless profusion over the collar of the coat.

Of the family album I would rather not speak. It is scarcely yet extinct. A respectable silence shall accompany its departing days.

Perhaps these things may to some appear mere trivialities; but to recall them awakens many memories, brings back thoughts of bygone days—days illumined with the sunshine of Youth and Hope on which it is pleasant to linger. As someone has finely said: "We lose a proper sense of the richness of life if we do not look back on the scenes of our youth with imagination and warmth."

CHAPTER V

Early Office Life

In the year 1867, at the age of sixteen, I became a junior clerk in the Midland Railway at Derby, at a salary of £15 a year.

From pre-natal days I was destined for the railway service, as an oyster to its shell. The possibility of any other vocation for his sons never entered the mind of my father, nor the mind of many another father in the town of Derby.

My railway life began on a drizzling dismal day in the early autumn. My father took me to the office in which I was to make a start and presented me to the chief clerk. I was a tall, thin, delicate, shy, sensitive youth, with dark curly hair, worn rather long, and I am sure I did not look at all a promising specimen for encountering the rough and tumble of railway work.

The chief clerk handed me over to one of his assistants, who without ceremony seated me on a tall stool at a high desk, and put before me, to my great dismay, a huge pile of formidable documents which he called *Way Bills*. He gave me some instructions, but I was too confused to understand them, and too shy to ask questions. I only know that I felt very miserable and hopelessly at sea. Visions of being dismissed as an incompetent rose before me; but soon, to my great relief, it was discovered that the Way Bills were too much for me and that I must begin at more elementary duties.

A few weeks afterwards, when I had found my feet a little, I was promoted from the simple tasks assigned to me in consequence of my first failure

and attached to the goods-train-delays clerk, a long-bearded elderly man with a very kind face. He was quite fatherly to me and took a great deal of trouble in teaching me my work. With him I soon felt at ease, and was happy in gaining his approbation. One thing found favour in his eyes; I wrote a good clear hand and at fair speed. In those days penmanship was a fine art. No cramped or sprawling writing passed muster. Typewriting was not dreamed of, and, at Derby, shorthand had not appeared on the scene.

One or two other juniors and myself sedulously practised imitating the penmanship of those senior clerks who wrote fine or singular hands. At this I was particularly successful and proud of my skill, until one day the chief clerk detained me after closing time, gave me a good rating, and warned me to stop such a dangerous habit which might lead, he said, to the disgrace of forgery. He spoke so seriously and shook his head so wisely that (to use Theodore Hook's old joke) " I thought there must be something in it, ' and so, for a long while, I gave up the practice.

Office hours in those days were nominally from nine till six, but for the juniors especially often much longer. In 1868 or 1869, I do not remember which, a welcome change took place; the hours were reduced to from nine till five, and arrangements made for avoiding late hours for the juniors. This early closing was the result of an "appeal unto Cæsar." The clerical staff in all the offices had combined and presented a petition in the highest quarter. The boon was granted, and I remember the wave of delight that swept over us, and how we enjoyed the long summer evenings. It was in the summer time the change took place.

Combined action amongst railway employees was not common then, not even in the wage-earning class, but Trade Unionism, scarcely yet legalised, was clamouring for recognition. Strikes sometimes occurred but were not frequent.

In 1867 Mr. James Allport was general manager of the Midland Railway, Mr. Thomas Walklate the goods manager and Mr. William Parker head of the department in which I began my railway life. Ned Farmer was a notable Midland man at that time; notable for his bucolic appearance, his genial personality, and, most of all, for the well-known songs he wrote. He was

in charge of the company's horses, bought them, fed them, cared for them. He was a big-bodied, big-hearted, ruddy-faced, farmerlike man of fifty or so; and the service was proud of him. He had a great sense of humour and used to tell many an amusing story. One morning, he told us, he had been greatly tickled by a letter which he had received from one of his inspectors whose habit it was to conclude every letter and report with the words " to oblige." The letter ran: " Dear Sir, I beg to inform you that Horse No. 99 died last night to oblige Yours truly, John Smith." He wrote the fine poem of " *Little Jim*," which everyone knew, and which almost every boy and girl could recite. His then well-known song, " *My old Wife's a good old cratur*," was very popular and was sung throughout the Midlands. The publication of his poems and songs was attended with great success. His Muse was simple, homely, humorous, pathetic and patriotic, and made a strong appeal to the natural feelings of ordinary folk. Often it was inspired by incidents and experiences in his daily life. His desk was in the same office as that in which I worked, and I was very proud of the notice he took of me, and grateful for many kindnesses he showed to me.

After spending twelve months or so in Mr. Parker's office, I was removed to another department. The office to which I was assigned had about thirty clerks, all of whom, except the chief clerk, occupied tall stools at high desks. I was one of two assistants to a senior clerk. This senior was middle-aged, and passing rich on eighty pounds a year. A quiet, steady, respectable married man, well dressed, cheerful, contented, he had by care and economy, out of his modest salary, built for himself a snug little double-breasted villa, in a pleasant outskirt of the town, where he spent his spare hours in his garden and enjoyed a comfortable and happy life.

Except the chief clerk, whose salary was about £160, I do not believe there was another whose pay exceeded £100 a year. The real head of the office, or *department* it was called, was not the chief clerk but one who ranked higher still and was styled *Head of Department*, and he received a salary of about £300. Moderate salaries prevailed, but the sovereign was worth much more then than now, while wants were fewer. Beer was threepence the pint and tobacco threepence the ounce, and beer we drank but never whiskey or wine; and pipes we smoked but not cigars.

This chief clerk was an amiable rather ladylike person, with small hands and feet and well-arranged curly hair. He was quick and clever and work sat lightly upon him. Quiet and good natured, when necessity arose he never failed to assert his authority. We all respected him. His young wife was pretty and pleasant, which was in his favour too.

The office was by no means altogether composed of steady specimens of clerkdom, but had a large admixture of lively sparks who, though they would never set the Thames on fire, brightened and enlivened our surroundings.

There was one, a literary genius, who had entered the service, I believe by influence, for influence and patronage were in those days not unknown. He wrote in his spare time the pantomime for a Birmingham theatre; and there constantly fluttered from his desk and circulated through the office, little scraps of paper containing quips and puns and jokes in prose or verse, or acrostics from his prolific pen. One clever acrostic upon the office boy, which has always remained in my memory, I should like for its delicate irony (worthy of Swift himself) to reproduce; but as that promising youth may still be in the service I feel I had better not, as irony sometimes wounds. For some time we had in the office an Apollo—a very Belvidere. He was a glory introduced into railway life by I know not what influence and disappeared after a time I know not where or why. A marvel of manly strength and grace and beauty, thirty years of age or so, and faultlessly dressed. Said to be aristocratically connected, he was the admiration of all and the darling of the young ladies of Derby. He lodged in fashionable apartments, smoked expensive cigars, attended all public amusements, was affable and charming, but reticent about himself. Why he ever came amongst us none ever knew; it was a mystery we never fathomed. He left as he came, a mystery still.

There was an oldish clerk whom we nicknamed *Gumpots*. This bore some resemblance to his surname, but there were other reasons which led to the playful designation and which I think justified it.

There was another scribe of quite an elegant sort: a perambulating tailor's dummy; a young man, well under thirty. He was good-looking, as far as regularity of features and a well-formed figure went, but mentally not much to boast of. He lounged about the station platform and the town

displaying his faultlessly fitting fashionable clothes. They always looked new, and as his salary was not more than £70 a year, and his parents, with whom he lived, were poor, the story that he was provided gratis by an enterprising tailor in town with these suits, on condition that he exhibited himself constantly in public, and told whenever he could who was his outfitter, received general credence, and I believe was true. He was never known to hurry, mingled little with men and less with women, but moved along in a stiff tailor-dummy fashion with a sort of self-conscious air which seemed to say, " Look at my figure and my clothes, how stylish they are!"

I remember a senior clerk in the office where I first worked to whom there was a general aversion. He was the only clerk who was really disliked, for all the others, old or young, serious or gay, steady or rackety, had each some pleasant quality. This unfortunate fellow had none. He was small, mean, cunning, a sneak and a mischief maker. He carried tales, told lies, and tried to make trouble, for no reason but to gratify his inclinations. He was a dark impish looking fellow, as lean as Cassius and as crafty and envious as Iago. The chief clerk, to his credit be it said, gave a deaf ear to his tales, and his craft and cunning obtained him little beyond our detestation.

In our own office about half our number were youths and single men and about half were married. Our youngest benedict was not more than eighteen years of age, and his salary only £45 a year. On this modest income for a time the young couple lived. It was a runaway match; on the girl's part an elopement from school. They lived in apartments, kept by an old lady, a widow who, being a woman, loved a bit of romance, and was very kind to them. He was a manly young fellow, a sportsman and renowned at cricket, and she was amiable and pretty, a little blonde beauty. The parents were well to do, and in due time forgave the imprudent match. At this we all rejoiced for he was a general favourite.

Looking back now it seems to me the office staff was in some ways a curious collection and very different to the clerks of to-day. Many of them had not entered railway life until nearly middle-age and they had not assimilated as an office staff does now, when all join as youths and are brought up together. They were original, individual, not to say eccentric. Whilst our office included certain steady married clerks, who worked hard and lived

ordinary middle-class respectable lives, and some few bachelors of quiet habit, the rest were a lively set indeed, by no means free from inclinations to coarse conviviality and many of them spendthrift, reckless and devil-may-care. At pay-day, which occurred monthly, most of these merry wights, after receiving their pay, betook themselves to the *Midland Tap* or other licensed house and there indulged, for the remainder of the afternoon, in abundant beer, pouring down glass after glass; in Charles Lamb's inimitable words: "the second to see where the first has gone, the third to see no harm happens to the second, a fourth to say there is another coming, and a fifth to say he is not sure he is the last." Some of the merriest of them would not return to the office that day but extend their carouse far into the night; to sadly realise next day that it was " the morning after the night before."

I do not think our ladylike chief clerk ever indulged in these orgies, but I never knew more than the mildest remonstrance being made by him or by anyone in authority.

Pay-day was also the time for squaring accounts. " The human species," Charles Lamb says, " is composed of two distinct races, the men who borrow and the men who lend." This was true of our office, but no equal division prevailed as the borrowers predominated and the lenders, the prudent, were a small minority. A general settlement took place monthly, after which a new period began—by the borrowers with joyous unconcern. " Take no thought for the morrow " was a maxim dear to the heart of these knights of the pen.

Swearing, as I have said, was not considered low or vulgar or unbecoming a gentleman. There was a senior clerk of some standing and position, a married man of thirty-five or forty years of age, who gloried in it. His expletives were varied, vivid and inexhaustible, and the turbid stream was easily set flowing. Had he lived a century earlier he might have been put in the stocks for his profanity, a punishment which magistrates were then, by Act of Parliament, empowered to inflict. He was a strange individual. *Long Jack* he was called. He is not in this world now so I may write of him with freedom.

No one's enemy but his own, he was kindly, good-natured, generous to a fault, but devil-may-care and reckless; and, at any one's expense, or at any cost to himself, would have his fling and his joke.

It was from his lankiness and length of limb that he was called "*Long Jack.*" He stood about six feet six in his boots. He must have had means of his own, as he lived in a way far beyond the reach of even a senior clerk of the first degree. How he came to be in a railway office, or, being in, retained his place, was a matter of wonder. Sad to tell, he had a little daughter, five or six years of age; his only child, a sweet, blue-eyed golden haired little fairy, who, never corrected, imitated her father's profanity, and apparently to his great delight. He treated it as a joke, as he treated everything. *Long Jack* loved to scandalise the town by his eccentricities. He would compound with the butcher, to drive his fast trotting horse and trap and deliver their joints, their steaks and kidneys to astonished customers, or arrange with the milkman to dispense the early morning milk, donning a milkman's smock, and carrying two milk-pails on foot. I remember one *Good Friday* morning when he perambulated the town with a donkey cart and sold, at an early hour, hot cross buns at the houses of his friends, afterwards gleefully boasting of having made a good profit on the morning's business. In the sixties and early seventies throughout the clerical staff of the Midland Railway were many who had not been brought up as clerks, who somehow or other had drifted into the service, whose early avocations had been of various kinds, and whose appearance, habits and manners imparted a picturesqueness to office life which does not exist to-day, and among these *Long Jack* was a prominent, but despite his joviality, it seems to me a pathetic figure.

CHAPTER VI

Friendship

Delicate health, as I have said, was my lot from childhood. After about eighteen months of office work I had a long and serious illness and was away from duty for nearly half a year. The latter part of the time I spent in the Erewash Valley, at the house of an uncle who lived near Pye Bridge. I was then under eighteen, growing fast, and when convalescing the country life and country air did me lasting good. Though a colliery district the valley is not devoid of rural beauty; to me it was pleasant and attractive and I wandered about at will.

One day I had a curious experience. In my walk I came across the Cromford Canal where it enters a tunnel that burrows beneath coal mines. At the entrance to the tunnel a canal barge lay. The bargees asked would I like to go through with them? "How long is it?" said I, and "how long will it take?" "Not long," said bargee, "come on!" "Right!" said I. The tunnel just fitted the barge, scarcely an inch to spare; the roof was so low that a man lying on his back on a plank placed athwart the vessel, with his feet against the roof, propelled the boat along. This was the only means of transit and our progress was slow and dreary. It was a journey of Cimmerian darkness; along a stream fit for Charon's boat. About halfway a halt was made for dinner, but I had none. Although I was cold and hungry the bargees' hospitality did not include a share of their bread and cheese but they gave me a drink of their beer. The tunnel is two miles long, and

was drippingly wet. Several hours passed before we emerged, not into sunshine but into the open, under a clouded sky and heavy rain which had succeeded a bright forenoon. I was nearly five miles from my uncle's house, lightly clad, hungry and tired. To my friends ever since I have not failed to recommend the passage of the Butterley tunnel as a desirable pleasure excursion.

When I returned to work my health was greatly improved and a small advancement in my position in the office made the rest of my time at Derby more agreeable, though, to tell the truth, I often jibbed at the drudgery of the desk and the monotony of writing pencilled-out letters which was now my daily task. Set tasks, dull routine, monotonous duty I ever hated.

About this time shorthand was introduced into the railway. A public teacher of Pitman's phonography had established himself in Derby, and the Midland engaged him to conduct classes for the junior clerks. It was not compulsory to attend the classes, but inducements to do so were held out. A special increase of salary was promised to those who attained a certain proficiency, and a further reward was offered; the two clerks who earned most marks and, in the teacher's opinion, reached the highest proficiency, were to be appointed assistants to the teacher and paid eight shillings weekly during future shorthand sessions, in addition to the special increase of salary. It was a great prize and keen was the contest. I had the good fortune to be one of the *two*; and the praise I got, and the benefit of the money made me contented for a time. My companion in this success, I am glad to know, is to-day alive and well, and like myself, a superannuated member of society. In his day he was a notable athlete, at one time bicycling champion of the Midland counties; and his prowess was won on the obsolete velocipede, with its one great wheel in front and a *very* small wheel behind.

A shorthand writer, my work was now to take down letters from dictation, a remove only for the better from the old way of writing from pencilled drafts.

Now it was that I made my first sincere and lasting friendship, a friendship true and deep, but which was destined to last for only ten short years. Tom was never robust and Death's cold hand closed all too soon a loveable

and useful life. Our friendship was close and intimate, such as is formed in the warmth of youth and which the grave alone dissolves. To me, during those short years, it lent brightness and gaiety to existence; and, in the days that have followed, its memory has been, and is now, a rich possession.

With both Tom and me it was friendship at first sight, and nothing until the final severance came ever disturbed its course. He came from Lincoln and joined the office I was in. He was two years my senior and had the advantage of several years' experience in station work which I had not. We were much alike in our tastes and habits, yet there was enough of difference between us to impart a relish to our friendship. Indifferent health, for he was delicate too, was one of the bonds between us. We were both fond of reading, of quiet walks and talks, and we hated crowds. He was a good musician, played the piano; but the guitar was the favourite accompaniment to his voice, a clear sweet tenor, and he sang well. I was not so susceptible to the " concord of sweet sounds " as he was, but could draw a little, paint a little, string rhymes together; and so we never failed to amuse and interest each other. He was impulsive, clever, quick of temper, ingenuous, and indignant at any want of truth or candour in others; generous to a fault and tender hearted as a woman. I was more patient than he, slower in wrath, yet we sometimes quarrelled over trifles but, like lovers, were quickly reconciled; and after these little explosions always better friends than ever.

At Derby, for three years or so, we were inseparable. What walks we had, what talks, " what larks, Pip!" Dickens we adored. How we talked of him and his books! How we longed to hear him read, but his public readings had ended, his voice for ever become mute and a nation mourned the loss of one who had moved it to laughter and to tears. Tom had a wonderful memory. He would recite page after page from *Pickwick*, *David Copperfield*, *Barnaby Rudge* or *Great Expectations*, as well as from *Shakespeare* and our favourite poets. He was fond of the pathetic, but the humorous moved him most, and his lively gifts were welcome wherever we went.

Our favourite walk on Saturday afternoons was to the pleasant village of Kedleston, some five miles from Derby, and to its fine old inn, which to us

was not simply the *Kedleston Inn* and nothing more but Dickens' *Maypole* and nothing less. We revelled in its resemblance, or its fancied resemblance to the famous old hostelry kept by old John Willet. Something in the building itself, though I cannot say that, like the *Maypole*, it had "more gable ends than a lazy man would like to count on a sunny day," and something in its situation, and something in the cronies who gathered in its comfortable bar, and something in the bar itself combined to form the pleasant illusion in which we indulged. The bar, like the *Maypole* bar, was snug and cosy and complete. Its rustic visitors were not so solemn and slow of speech as old John Willet and Mr. Cobb and long Phil Parkes and Solomon Daisy, " who would pass two mortal hours and a half without any of them speaking a single word, and who were firmly convinced that they were very jovial companions;" but they were as reticent and stolid and good natured as such simple country gaffers are wont to be.

I remember in particular one Saturday afternoon in late October. It was almost the last walk I had with Tom in Derby. The day was perfect; as clear and bright, as mellow and crisp, as rich in colour, as only an October day in England can be. We reached the *Maypole* between five and six o'clock. No young Joe Willet or gipsy Hugh was there to welcome us, but we were soon by our two selves in a homely little room, beside a cheerful fire, at a table spread with tea and ham and eggs and buttered toast and cakes—our weekly treat.

When this delightful meal was over, a stroll as far as the church and the stately Hall of the Curzons, back to the inn, an hour or so in the snug bar with the village worthies, who welcomed our almost weekly visits and the yarns we brought from Derby town; then back home by the broad highway, under the star-lit sky—an afternoon and an evening to be ever remembered.

The *Kedleston Inn*, I am told, no longer exists; no longer greets the eye of the wayfarer, no longer welcomes him to its pleasant bar. Now it is a farmhouse. No youthful enthusiast can now be beguiled into calling it *The Maypole;* and, indeed, in these unromantic days, though it had remained unchanged, there would be little danger of this I think.

Soon after this memorable day Tom left the service of the Midland for a

more lucrative situation with a mercantile firm in Glasgow, and I was left widowed and alone. For six months or more we had been living together in the country, some four miles from Derby, in the house of the village blacksmith. It was a pretty house, stood a little apart from the forge, and was called Rock Villa. I wonder if the present Engineer-in-Chief of the Midland Railway recollects a little incident connected with it. He (now Chief Engineer then a well grown youth of eighteen or nineteen) was younger than I, and was preparing for the engineering profession in which he has succeeded so well. He lived with his parents very near to Rock Villa, and one day, for some reason or other, we said we would each of us make a sketch of Rock Villa, afterwards compare them, and let his sister decide which was the better, so we set to work and did our best. In the matter of correct drawing his, I am sure, far surpassed mine, but the young lady decided in my favour, perhaps because my production looked more picturesque and romantic than his!

When Tom had gone I became dissatisfied with my work, and a disappointment which I suffered at being passed over in some office promotions increased that dissatisfaction. I was an expert shorthand writer and this seemed to be the only reason for keeping me back from better work, so at least I thought, and I think so still. My sense of injustice was touched; and I determined I would, like Tom, if the opportunity served, seek my fortune elsewhere. The chance I longed for came. I paid a short visit to Tom, and whilst in Glasgow, obtained the post of private clerk to the Stores Superintendent of the Caledonian Railway, and on the last day of the year 1872, I left the Midland Railway, to the service of which I had been as it were born, in which my father and uncles and cousins served, against the wish of my father, and to the surprise of my relatives. But I had reached man's estate, and felt a pride in going my own way, and in seeking, unassisted, my fortune, whatever it might be.

What had I learned in my first five years of railway work? Not very much; the next few years were to be far more fruitful; but I had acquired some business habits; a practical acquaintance with shorthand, which was yet to stand me in good stead; some knowledge of rates and fares, their nature and composition, which was also to be useful to me in after life; some

familiarity with the compilation of time-tables and the working of trains; but of practical knowledge of work at stations I was quite ignorant.

Thus equipped, without the parental blessing, with little money in my purse, with health somewhat improved but still delicate, I bade good-bye to Derby, light-hearted enough, and hopeful enough, and journeyed north to join my friend Tom, and to make my way as best I could in the commercial capital of " bonnie Scotland."

CHAPTER VII

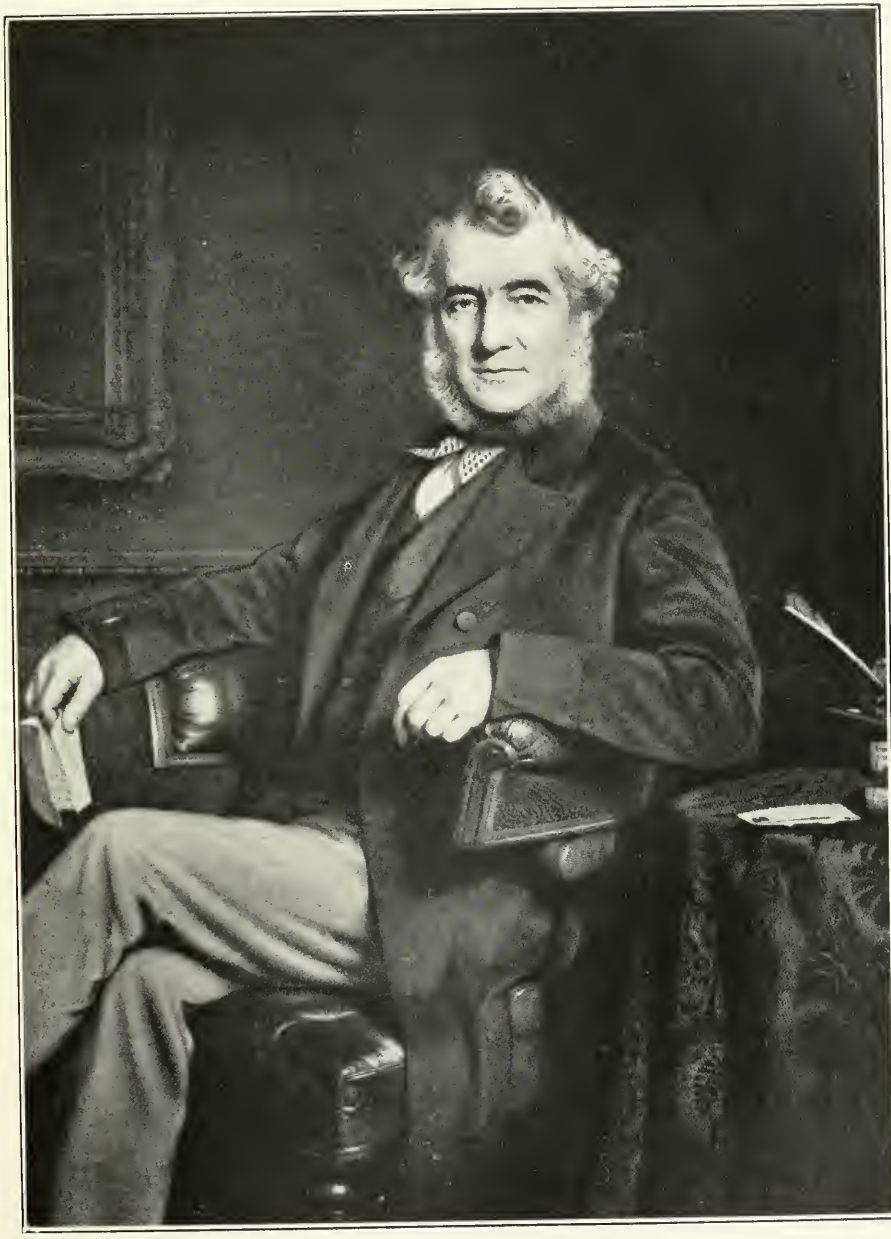
Railway Progress

Before entering upon any description of the new life that awaited me in Glasgow, I will briefly allude to the principal events connected with the Midland and with railways generally which took place during the first five years of my railway career.

Closely associated with many of these events was Mr. James Allport, the Midland general manager, one of the foremost and ablest of the early railway pioneers, regarding whom it is fit and proper a few words should be said. Strangely enough I never saw him until nearly two years after I entered the Midland service, and this was on the occasion of a visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to Derby. We clerks were allowed good positions on the station platform to witness the arrival of their Royal Highnesses by their special train from London. Mr. Allport accompanied them along the platform to the carriages outside the station. Probably the chairman and directors of the company were also present, but our eyes were not for them. Directors were to us junior clerks, remote personalities, mythical beings dwelling on Olympian heights.

It was a great thing to see the future King and Queen of England, and our loyalty and enthusiasm knew no bounds. They were young and charming, and beloved by the people; but, hero worshipper as I was, our great general manager was to me even more than royalty. I little thought, as I looked on Mr. Allport then, that, twenty years later, I should appear before

To face page 34.



SIR JAMES ALLPORT

him to give evidence concerning Irish railways, when he was chairman of an important Royal Commission.

The great abilities which enable a man to win and hold such a position as his fired my fancy. I look at men and men's affairs with different eyes now; but Mr. Allport was a great personality, and youthful enthusiasm might well be excused for placing him on a high pedestal. He was tall and handsome, with well-shaped head, broad brow, large clear keen eyes, firm well-formed mouth, strong nose and chin, possessed of an abundant head of hair, not close cropped in the style of to-day, but full and wavy, and what one never sees now, a handsome natural curl along the centre of the head with a parting on each side. This suited him well, and added to his distinctive individuality. When I entered the Midland service he was fifty-six years of age and in the plenitude of his power, for those were days when the company was forcing its way north and south and widely extending its territory. He was the animating spirit of all the company's enterprises. No opposition, no difficulties ever daunted him. His nature was bold and fitted to command, and to him is due, in a large degree, the proud position the Midland holds to-day. It was not until late in life, 1884 I think, when he had reached the age of seventy-two, that his great qualities were accorded public recognition. He then received the honour of knighthood but had retired from active service and become a director of his company.

There was another personality that loomed large, in those years, on the Midland—Samuel Swarbrick, the accountant. His world was finance, and in it he was a master. So great was his skill that the Great Eastern Railway Company, which, financially, was in a parlous condition and their dividend *nil*, in 1866 took him from the Midland and made him their general manager, at, in those days, a princely salary. Their confidence was fully justified; his skill brought the company, if not to absolute prosperity, at least to a dividend-paying condition, and laid the foundation of the position that company now occupies.

His reputation as a man of figures stood as I have just said very high, but, whilst I was at Derby, and before he moved to the Great Eastern, he was prominent also as the happy possessor of the best coloured meerschaum pipes in the county, and this, in those days, was no small distinction. But

a man does not achieve greatness by his own unaided efforts. Others, his subordinates, help him to climb the ladder. It was so with Mr. Swarbrick. There was a tall policeman in the service of the company, the possessor of a fine figure, and a splendid long sandy-coloured beard. His primary duty was to air himself at the front entrance of the station arrayed in a fine uniform and tall silk hat, and this duty he conscientiously performed. Secondarily, his occupation was to start the colouring of new meerschaums for Mr. Swarbrick. Non-meerschaum smokers may not know what a delicate task this is, but once well begun the rest is comparatively easy. The tall policeman was an artist at the work; but it nearly brought him to a tragic end, as I will relate.

Outside Derby station was a ticket platform at which all incoming trains stopped for the collection of tickets. This platform was on a bridge that crossed the river. One Saturday night our fine policeman was airing himself on this platform, colouring a handsome new meerschaum for Mr. Swarbrick. It was a windy night and a sudden gust blew his tall hat into the river, and after it unfortunately dropped the meerschaum. Hat and pipe both! Without a moment's hesitation in plunged the policeman to the rescue; but the river was deep and he an indifferent swimmer. The night was dark and he was not brought to land till life had nearly left him. He recovered, but lost his sight and became blind for the rest of his life. Mr. Swarbrick provided for him, I believe, by setting him up in a small public house, where, I am told, despite his loss of sight, he ended his days not unhappily.

In 1867, compared with 1851, the Midland had made giant strides. It worked a thousand miles of railway against five hundred; its capital had doubled and reached thirty-two millions, about one-fourth of what it is to-day; its revenue had risen from about a million to over a million and a-half; and the dividend was five and a half compared with two and five-eighths per cent.

The opening of the Midland route to Saint Pancras; the projection of the Settle and Carlisle line; the introduction of Pullman cars, parlour saloons, sleeping and dining cars; the adoption of gas and electricity for the lighting of carriages; the running of third-class carriages by all trains; the

abolition of second-class and reduction of first-class fares; and the establishment of superannuation funds were amongst the most striking events in the railway world during this period.

On the first day of October, 1868, the first passenger train ran into Saint Pancras station, and the Midland competition for London traffic now began in earnest, and from that time onward helped to develop those magnificent rival passenger train services between the Metropolis and England's busy centres and between England and Scotland and Ireland, which, for luxury, speed and comfort, stand pre-eminent. Prior to this, the Midland access to London had been by the exercise of running powers over the Great Northern Railway from Hitchin to King's Cross. The Great Northern, reluctant to lose the Midland, and fearing their rivalry, had, a few years previously, offered them running powers in perpetuity. "No," said Mr. Allport, "it is impossible that you can reconcile the interests of these two great companies on the same railway; we are always only *second-best.*" Second-best certainly never suited the ambitious policy of the Midland, and so the offer was rejected, and their line to London made. It was at that time thought that the Midland headquarters would be removed from Derby to London, and I remember how excited the clerical staff and their wives and sweethearts were at the prospect. The idea was seriously considered but, for various reasons, abandoned.

The Settle and Carlisle line, perhaps the greatest achievement of the Midland, was not completed until sometime after I left their service. It was opened in the year 1875. In 1866 they obtained the Act for its construction. For some years their eyes had been as eagerly turned towards Scotland as the eyes of Scotchmen had ever been towards England, and for the same reason—the hope of gain. The Midland had hitherto been excluded from any proper share of the Scotch traffic, but now having secured the right to extend their system to Carlisle, they hoped to join forces with their allies, the Glasgow and South-Western, and secure a fair share of it. But "there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," and in 1869 in a fit of timidity—a weakness most unusual with them—they nearly lost this valuable right. The year 1867 was a time of great financial anxiety; the Midland was weighted with heavy expenditure on their London extension, the

424108

necessity for further capital became clamant, the shareholders were seized with alarm, and a shareholders' consultative committee was appointed, with the result that, in 1869, the company, badgered and worried beyond endurance, actually applied to Parliament for power to abandon the Settle and Carlisle line, and for authority to enter into an agreement with the London and North-Western for access over that company's railway to Carlisle. That power and authority, however, Parliament, *in its wisdom*, refused to give.

The financial clouds, as all clouds do, after a time dispersed; the outlook grew brighter, the Midland made the line, and it was opened, as I have said, throughout to Carlisle in 1875.

In the autumn of 1872 Mr. Allport visited the United States and was greatly impressed with the Pullman cars. On his return he introduced them on the Midland, both the parlour car and the sleeper. About the same time the London and North-Western also commenced the running of sleeping cars to Scotland and to Holyhead. To which company belongs the credit of being first in the field with this most desirable additional accommodation for the comfort of passengers I am not prepared to say; perhaps honors were easy.

But the greatest innovation of the time were the running by the Midland of third-class carriages by all trains; and the abolition of second-class carriages and fares, accompanied by a reduction of the first-class fares. The first event took place in 1872, but the latter not till 1875. The first was a democratic step indeed, and aroused great excitement. Williams, in his book *The Midland Railway*, wrote, " On the last day of March, 1872, we remarked to a friend: ' To-morrow morning the Midland will be the most popular railway in England.' Nor did we incur much risk by our prediction. For on that day the Board had decided that on and after the first of April, they would run third-class carriages by all trains; the wires had flashed the tidings to the newspapers, the bills were in the hands of the printers, and on the following morning the Directors woke to find themselves famous." At a later period, Mr. Allport said, if there was one part of his public life on which he looked back with more satisfaction than another it was the time when this boon was conferred on third-class passengers.

When we contemplate present conditions of third-class travel it is hard

to realise what they were before this change took place; slow speed, delays and discomfort; bare boards; hard seats; shunting of third-class trains into sidings and waiting there for other trains, sometimes even goods trains, to pass. Mr. Allport might well be proud of the part he played.

Another matter which concerned, not so much the public as the welfare of the clerical staff of the railways, was the establishment of Superannuation Funds; yet the public was interested too, for the interests of the railway service and the general community are closely interwoven. Up till now station masters and clerks had struggled on without prospect of any provision for their old age. Their pay was barely sufficient to enable them to maintain a respectable position in life and afforded no margin for providing for the future.

At last, the principal railway companies, with the consent of their shareholders, and with Parliamentary sanction, established Superannuation Funds, which ever since have brought comfort and security to their officers and clerical staff, and have proved of benefit to the companies themselves. A pension encourages earlier retirement from work, quickens promotion, and vitalises the whole service. On nearly all railways retirement is optional at sixty and compulsory at sixty-five.

The London and North-Western was the first company to adopt the system of superannuation, the London and South-Western second, the Great Western came third, the Midland fourth, and other companies followed in their wake.

In 1873 the Railway Clearing House obtained Parliamentary power to form a fund for its staff, with permission to railway companies not large enough to successfully run funds of their own, and also to the Irish Railway Clearing House, to become partners in this fund. The Irish Clearing House took advantage of this, as also have many railway companies, and practically the whole of the clerical service throughout the United Kingdom can to-day look forward to the benefits of superannuation.

CHAPTER VIII

Scotland, Glasgow Life, and the Caledonian Line.

On the last day of December, in the year 1872, between seven and eight o'clock in the evening, I arrived at Glasgow by the Caledonian train from Carlisle, and was met at Buchanan Street Station by my good friend Tom.

After supper we repaired to the streets to see the crowds that congregate on *Hogmanhay*, to make acquaintance with the mysteries of " first-footin'," and to join in ushering in the " guid new year." It was a stirring time, for Scotchmen encounter their *Hogmanhay* with ardent *spirits*. They are as keen in their pleasures as in their work. Compare for instance their country dances with ours. As Keats, in his letters from Scotland says, " it is about the same as leisurely stirring a cup o' tea and beating up a batter pudding." The public houses and bars were driving a lively trade, but " Forbes Mackenzie " was in force, and come eleven o'clock, though it were a hundred *Hogmanhays*, they all had to close. We met some new-made friends of Tom's and joined in their conviviality. I was the dark complexioned man of the party, and as a " first-footer " in great request. We did not go home till morning, and reached there a little hilarious ourselves, but it was our first *Hogmanhay* and may be forgiven.

Dear reader, did you ever lie in a *concealed bed*? It is a Scottish device cunningly contrived to murder sleep. At least so Tom and I found it. It was my fate to sleep, to lie I should say, in one for several weeks. Its purpose is to economise space, and like Goldsmith's chest of drawers, it is

" contrived a double debt to pay," a sleeping room by night, a sitting room by day.

Whilst Glasgow is a city of *flats* its people are resourceful and energetic. Keen and canny, they drive a close bargain but, scrupulous and conscientious, fulfil it faithfully. Proud of their city and its progress, its industries and manufactures, its civic importance, they are a little disdainful perhaps, perhaps a little jealous, of their beautiful elder sister, Edinburgh. Glasgow is the Belfast of Scotland!

Self-contained houses are the exception and are limited to the well-to-do. The flat, in most cases, means a restricted number of apartments, insufficient bedroom accommodation, and the *concealed bed* is Glasgow's way of solving the difficulty.

Tom and I did not take kindly to our hole in the wall, and soon found other lodgings where space was not so circumscribed, and where we could sleep in an open bed in an open room.

Our new quarters were a great success; a ground-floor flat with a fine front door; a large well-furnished sitting room with two windows looking out on to the street, and an equally large double-bedded room at the back of the sitting room. Our landlady, a kind, motherly, canny Scotchwoman, looked after us well and favoured us with many a bit of good advice: " You must be guid laddies, and tak care o' the bawbees; you maun na eat butchers' meat twice the week; tak plenty o' parritch and dinna be extravagant." Economy with the good old soul was a cardinal virtue, waste a deadly sin. I fear she was often shocked at our easy Saxon ways, though Tom and I thought ourselves models of thrift.

Once, it was on a Sunday, Tom and I, with a party of friends, had had a very long walk, a regular pedestrian excursion, thirty miles, there or thereabouts, to use a Scotticism, and poor Tom was quite knocked up and confined to bed for several days. Our good old landlady was greatly shocked; a strict Sabbatarian, she knew it was a punishment for " breakin' the Sabbath; why had na ye gane to the kirk like guid laddies?" We modestly reminded her that we always did go, excepting of course on this particular Sunday. " Then whit business had ye to stay awa on ony Sabbath?" We had nothing to say in answer to this. The dear old creature

was really shocked at our backsliding; but she nursed Tom very tenderly all the same.

When the sultry heat of summer came we found Glasgow very trying, and though sorry to leave our good landlady, moved into the country, to Cambuslang, a village some four miles from the city, which was then becoming a favourite residential resort.

At Cambuslang I made the acquaintance and became the friend of *Cynicus*, the humorous artist whose satirical sketches have, for many years, been well-known and well sold in England, in Scotland and in Ireland too. He was then a youth of about twenty. Longing to see the world and without the necessary means, he emulated Goldsmith, made a prolonged tour in France and Italy supporting himself not by his flute nor by disputations, but by his brush and palette. For a few weeks at a time he worked in towns or cities, sold what he painted, and then, with purse replenished, wandered on. He and I were living " doon the watter," at Dunoon, on the Clyde, one summer month. A Fancy Dress Bazaar was on at the time. The first evening we went to it, and he, unobserved, made furtive sketches of the most prominent people and the prettiest girls. We both sat up all that night, he working at and finishing the sketches. Next morning by the first boat and first train, we took them to Glasgow, had six hundred lithographic copies struck off; back post-haste to Dunoon; in the evening to the Bazaar, and sold the copies at threepence each. It was an immense success; we could have disposed of twice the number; every pretty girl's admirer wanted a copy of her picture, and the portraits of the presiding " meenister " and of the good-looking unmarried curate were eagerly purchased by fond mammas and adoring daughters. We had our fun, and cleared besides a profit of nearly four pounds sterling. This financial *coup* would not have come off so well but for the warm-hearted co-operation of our railway printers, McCorquodale and Coy. They, good people, entered into our exploit with a will, did their part well, and made little if any profit, generously leaving that to *Cynicus* and myself.

To his mother, like many another clever son, *Cynicus* owed his talent. She was a woman of great intellectual endowment, with highly cultivated literary tastes. Her memory was remarkable and her conversational powers

very great. She read much and thought deeply. In a modest way her parlour, which attracted many young people of literary and artistic leanings, recalled the *Salons* of France of a century ago. She entertained charmingly with tea and cakes and delightful talk. Of strong, firm, decided character, she might, perhaps, have been thought a little deficient in womanly gentleness had not genuine kindness of heart, motherly feeling, and a happy humour lent a softness to her features and imparted to them a particular charm. She exercised an authority over her household which inspired respect and contrasted strikingly with the easy-going parental ways of to-day. There were other sons and there were daughters also, all more or less gifted, but *Cynicus* was the genius of the family—its bright particular star.

The various lodgings of my bachelor days was never quite of the conventional sort. The Cambuslang quarters certainly were not. The house was large and old-fashioned. Originally it had been two smallish houses: the two front doors still remained side by side, but only one was used. The rooms on the ground floor were small, the original building composed of one storey only, but another had been added of quite spacious dimensions. We had two excellent, large well-furnished rooms upstairs. The landlady was an interesting character and so was her husband. She was Irish, he Scotch; she about seventy years of age, he under fifty; she ruddy, healthy, hearty, good-looking; he, pale, nervous, shy, retiring. But on the last Thursday of each month he was quite another man. On that day he went to Glasgow to collect the rents of some small houses he owned; and generally came home rather " fou " and hilarious, when the old lady would take him in hand, and put him to bed.

They had an only child, a son, a grown up man, an uncouth ill-looking ungainly fellow, who did no work, smoked and loafed about, but was the idol of his mother. He resembled neither parent in the least, and, except that such vagaries of nature are not unknown, it might have been supposed that some cuckoo had visited the parental nest.

A gaunt, hard-featured domestic completed this interesting family, and she was uncommon too. By no means young, what Balzac calls " a woman of canonical age," she resembled Père Grandet's tall Nanon. Like Nanon, she had been the devoted servant of the family for nearly a quarter of a century,

and like her, had no interest outside that of her master and mistress. She was always working, rarely went out, spoke little, but ministered to the wants of Tom and myself, and waited on us with unremitting attention.

Despite all drawbacks, however, they were fine lodgings. The old lady was a wonderful cook and had all the liberality of her race.

New Year's Day, the great Scotch holiday, Tom and I spent in Edinburgh, and returned much impressed with its stately beauty.

The next morning I entered upon my work at St. Rollox, where the stores department of the Caledonian Railway is situated. The head of the department was styled Stores Superintendent. I thought him the most impressive looking man I had ever seen. He overpowered me; in his presence I never felt at ease. He was a big man, and looked bigger than he was; good-looking too; ruddy, portly, well-dressed and formal. An embodiment of commercial energy and dignity. In his face gravity, keenness, and good health were blended. Soon after I joined his staff he left the Caledonian to become General Manager of Young's Paraffin Oil Company, and subsequently its Managing Director. Success, I believe, always attended him. No position could lose any of its importance in his hands. When he left St. Rollox a great blank was felt; he filled so large a space. He has lately gone to his rest full of years and honors.

I fear he never liked me, nor had any great opinion of my abilities. This was not to be wondered at, for I am sure I did not display any excessive zeal for the work on which I was then employed, and which I found monotonous and uninteresting.

He confided to his chief clerk, who was my friend, that one day he had seen me, in business hours, in the city, smoking a cigarette and looking at the girls, and was sure I would never do much good. He had very strict business notions. I confessed to the cigarette, but not to the graver charge. It was a wholesome tonic, however, and pulled me up. I wanted to get on in life; ambition was stirring within me; and I formed some good resolutions which, as time went on, I kept more or less faithfully.

At St. Rollox one's daily lunch was a matter of some difficulty. It was a district of factories, and the only restaurants were the Great Western Cooking Depots, where one could get a steak and bread and cheese for

fivepence, but the rooms and tables and accessories were, to say the least, unappetising. Hunger had to be satisfied, however, and I had to swallow my pride and my five-pennyworth. I varied this occasionally by bringing with me my own sandwiches and eating them seated on a tombstone in Sighthill cemetery, which was less than a quarter of a mile distant from the stores department.

My work, as I have said, was monotonous enough: writing letters from dictation, an occupation which gave but little exercise to one's faculties. I obtained some variation by occasionally taking a turn through the various stores and getting into touch with the practical men in charge. They were always very civil and ready to talk of their business, and so I learned something of the nature, quality, uses and cost of many things necessary to the working of a railway, which I afterwards found very useful. Occasionally also I visited the laboratory, in which an analytical chemist was regularly engaged.

The event which, in my short service of two years with the Caledonian, seemed to me of the greatest moment, was that, after six months or so, I became a taxpayer! This was an event indeed. In the offices at Derby it was only, as a rule, middle-aged or old men who attained this proud distinction; and here was I, not yet twenty-two, with my salary raised to £100 a year, paying income tax at the rate of *threepence* in the pound on forty pounds, for an abatement of sixty pounds was allowed. Until I got used to the novelty I was as proud as Lucifer.

The office in which I now worked had no Apollos, no literary geniuses, no Long Jacks, no boy benedicts, such as adorned our desks at Derby, but it rejoiced in one *rara avis*, who came a few months after and left a few months before me. He was a middle-aged, aristocratic, kind, good-hearted, unbusinesslike man, and was brother to a baronet. He professed a knowledge of medicine and brought a bottle, a bolus or a plaster, whichever he deemed best, whenever any of us complained of cold or cough, of headache or backache or any ailment whatever. When he left we all received from him a parting gift. Mine was a handsome, expensive, red-felt chest protector. I wore it constantly for a year or two and, for aught I know, it may be that by its protecting influence against the rigour of Glasgow winters,

the bituminous atmosphere of St. Rollox and the smoke-charged fogs of the city, I am alive and well to-day. Who can tell? It is certain that I then had a bad cough nearly always; and this I am sure was what decided the form of his parting gift to me.

It was about this time that I attended my first public dinner and made my first speech in public. Several days before the event I was told that, being in the Volunteer Force, I had been placed on the toast list to reply for the Army, Navy and Volunteers. It was a railway dinner, for the purpose of celebrating the departure to England, on promotion, of the chief clerk in the Midland Railway Company's Scottish Agency Office. The dinner was largely attended. The idea of having to speak filled me with trepidation. But to my great surprise I acquitted myself with credit. Once on my legs I found that nervousness left me, words came freely and I even enjoyed the novel experience. To suddenly discover oneself proficient where failure had been feared increases self esteem and adds to the sum of happiness. At this dinner I also made my first acquaintance with that " Great chieftain o' the puddin' race," the *Haggis*, which deserves the pre-eminence it enjoys.

One night, towards the end of December, in 1874, when skating by moonlight, not far from Cambuslang, I chanced to meet a young friend, a clerk in the Glasgow and South-Western Railway, who, like myself, was enjoying the pleasures of the ice. Tom was not with me, for he, poor fellow! was not well enough to be out o' nights in winter. My young friend gave me, with great eagerness, a rare piece of news. Mr. Johnstone, the Glasgow and South-Western general manager, was retiring and Mr. Wainwright was to succeed him! Well, that did not excite me, and I wondered at his earnestness; but more was to follow. Mr. Wainwright, as general manager, required a principal clerk and there was, it seemed, no one in the place quite suitable. He must be good at correspondence, and expert at shorthand. I was, my young friend said, the very man; I must apply. Mr. Wainwright was English, so was I; I came from the Midland, and the Midland and the Glasgow and South-Western were hand and glove. How lucky we had met; he had not thought of me till this very moment. It was fate. Would I write to-night? By this time I was as eager as himself. No more skating for me that night. I hurried home, Tom and I composed a careful and judicious

letter. I posted it in Her Majesty's pillar box hard by; went to bed, but was too excited to sleep. An answer soon came, and an interview with Mr. Wainwright followed. I received the appointment, at a salary of £120 a year to begin with; and in the early days of the new year, two years after my first appearance in Scotland, entered upon my duties, not at Saint Enoch Station, where the headquarters of the Glasgow and South-Western now are, but at Bridge Street Station on the south side of the river, where the office staff of the company was then accommodated.

CHAPTER IX

General Railway Acts of Parliament

Such unromantic literature as Acts of Parliament had not, it may be supposed, up to this, formed part of my mental pabulum. I knew that an Act was a necessary preliminary to the construction of a railway, and this was all I knew concerning the relations between the railways and the State. Whilst a little learning may be a dangerous thing, in my new situation, I soon discovered that a general manager's clerk would be the better of possessing *some* knowledge of the numerous Acts of Parliament that affected railway companies. Almost daily questions arose in which such knowledge was useful; so I determined to become acquainted with them, and in my leisure hours made as profound a study as I could of that compilation which, in railway offices was then in general use—*Bigg's General Railway Acts*. I found the formidable looking volume more readable than I had imagined and less difficult to understand than I had expected.

Governments have ever kept a watchful eye on railway companies. Up to 1875, the year at which we have now arrived, no less than 112 general Acts of Parliament affecting railways had been placed on the Statute Book of the realm. They were applicable to all railways alike, and in addition to and independent of the special Acts which each company must obtain for itself, first for its incorporation and construction, and afterwards for extensions of its system, for the raising of capital, and for various other purposes.

Many of the general Acts have been framed upon the recommendations

of various Select Committees and Royal and Vice-Regal Commissions, which have been appointed from time to time since railways began. From 1835 down to the present year of 1918 some score or more of these Committees and Commissions have gravely sat and issued their more or less wise and weighty reports.

What are these numerous Acts of Parliament and what are their objects, scope, and intentions?

Whilst neither time nor space admit of detailed exposition, not to speak of the patience of my readers, a few observations upon some of the principal enactments may not be inapposite or uninteresting.

Pride of place belongs to the *Carriers' Act* of 1830, passed in the reign of William IV., five years after the first public railway (the Stockton and Darlington) was opened. This Act, although in it the word *railway* does not appear, is an important Act to railway companies, and possesses the singular and uncommon merit of having been framed for the *protection* of Common Carriers. It is intituled "*An Act for the more effectual Protection of Mail Contractors, Stage Coach Proprietors, and other Common Carriers for Hire, against the Loss or Injury to Parcels or Packages delivered to them for Conveyance or Custody, the Value and Contents of which shall not be Declared to them by the Owners thereof.*" The draughtsman of this dignified little Act it is clear was greatly addicted to *capitals*. Probably he thought they heightened effect, much as Charles Lamb spelt plum pudding with a *b*—"plumb pudding," because, he said, "it reads fatter and more suetty." At the time this Act came into being, railways in the eye of Parliament were public highways, upon which you or I, if we paid the prescribed tolls, could convey our traffic, our vehicles, or ourselves. In the years 1838-1840 many of the companies obtained powers enabling them to act as public carriers; and in 1840 questions having arisen in Parliament as to the rights of the public in this respect the subject was referred to a Select Committee of the House of Commons. The Committee's report disposed of the view which, until then, Parliament had held, and expressed the opinion that the right of persons to run their own engines and carriages was a dead letter for the good reason, amongst others, that it was necessary for railway trains to be run and controlled by and under one complete undivided authority.

After the *Carriers' Act*, which applied to all carriers as well as to railways, the first general railway Act of importance was the *Railways (Conveyance of Mails) Act* of 1838. This Act enabled the Postmaster-General to require railway companies to convey mails by all trains and to provide sorting carriages when necessary, the Royal Arms to be painted on such carriages, and in 1844, under the *Railway Regulation Act*, it was further enacted that the Postmaster-General could require, for the conveyance of mails, that trains should be run at any rate of speed, *certified to be safe*, but not to exceed 27 miles an hour!

As I have said, the Select Committee of 1840 reported against the right of the public to run their own engines and carriages on railways. They made recommendations which led to the passing of the *Railway Regulation Act* of that year, and in that Act powers were, for the first time, conferred upon the Board of Trade in connection with railways. It was the beginning of that authority, which since has greatly grown, but which the Board of Trade have in the main exercised with an impartiality, which public authorities do not always display. The Act empowered the Board, before any new railway was opened, to require notice from the railway company. This power was repealed by an Act of 1842, and larger powers granted in its place, including the right to compel the inspection of such railways before being opened for traffic. The Act of 1840 also required the companies, under penalty, to furnish to the Board of Trade returns of traffic, as well as of all accidents attended with personal injury; and to submit their bye-laws for certification.

Of the *railway mania* period I have spoken in a previous chapter. For a time enormous success attended some of the lines. Amongst others the Liverpool and Manchester and the Stockton and Darlington enjoyed mouth-watering dividends; the former ten, the latter fifteen per cent.! Said the Government to themselves, " 'Tis time we saw to this," and accordingly they passed the *Railway Regulation Act* of 1844. This Act provided that if at any time, after twenty-one years, the dividend of any railway should exceed ten per cent., the Treasury might revise the rates and fares so as to reduce the profits to not more than ten per cent. This expectation of high dividends, I need hardly say, has not been realised, and the Act in this respect has been a dead letter. The Act also conferred an option on the Treasury to acquire

future railways at twenty-five years purchase of the annual profits; or, if such profits were less than ten per cent., the price was to be left to arbitration.

It is interesting now, when, owing to the war, the railways of the land are under temporary Government control, and their future all uncertain, to remember that, on the Statute Book to-day, there is an Act which provides for State purchase of the railways of the country. Whether a solution of the difficulty will be found in State purchase or in State control it is hard to say, but it is clear that some solution of the problem will become imperative when the war is ended and normal conditions return. Justice and reason demand it.

In the year 1845 three long Acts of Parliament came into force; the *Companies Clauses*, the *Lands Clauses* and the *Railway Clauses Acts*. Between them they contained no less than 483 sections. Each Act was a consolidating measure. The first contained provisions usually inserted in Acts for the constitution of public companies, the second the same in regard to the taking of land compulsorily, and the third consolidated in one general statute provisions usually introduced into Acts of Parliament authorising the construction of railways.

The *Railway Clauses Act* authorised railway companies to use locomotive engines, carriages and wagons; to carry passengers and goods, and to make reasonable charges not exceeding the tolls authorised by their special Acts. Since then the whole of the trade of transit by rail has been conducted by the companies owning the lines.

The gauge of railways in Great Britain was not fixed upon any scientific principle. At first it followed the width of the coal tram-roads in the north of England, which was adopted simply on account of its practical convenience (five feet being the usual width of the gates through which the " way-leaves " led) and so four feet eight and a-half inches became the ordinary gauge, but in the early days it was by no means the universal gauge. Five feet was chosen for the Eastern Counties Railway; seven feet for the Great Western and five feet six was used in Scotland. The Ulster Company in Ireland made twenty-five miles of the line from Belfast to Dublin on a gauge of six feet two, while the Drogheda Company, which set out from Dublin to meet the Ulster line, adopted five feet two. When the

Ulster Company complained of this, the Irish Board of Works, it is said, admitted that it was a little awkward, but added that, as it was not likely the intervening part would ever be made, it did not much matter. The subject was, I believe, in Ireland referred to a General Pasley, who consulted the authorities (who were many) throughout the kingdom. He ultimately solved the question by adding up the various gauges the authorities favoured, and recommended the mean, which was five feet three inches; and so, for Ireland, five feet three became the standard gauge.

" The battle of the gauges," as it was styled at the time, was lively and spirited. Eventually it was decided by Parliament, which in the year 1846 passed the *Railway Regulation (Gauge) Act*. This Act ordained that in Great Britain all future railways were to be constructed on a gauge of four feet eight and a-half inches, and in Ireland of five feet three inches, excepting only certain extensions of the broad gauge Great Western Railway.

Up to this time no action at common law was maintainable against a person who by his wrongful act, neglect or default caused the immediate death of another person, and an Act (known as *Lord Campbell's Act*), " for compensating the Families of Persons Killed by Accidents," became law. This enactment was due principally to the railway accidents that occurred. They were relatively more numerous than they are now, for the many modern appliances for ensuring safety had not then been introduced. The Act provided that compensation would be for the benefit of wife, husband, parent and child of the person whose death shall have been caused. The Act did not apply to Scotland. Perhaps it was because the laws of the two countries differed more then than now, and the life of the railways in Scotland was young, England being well ahead. Probably England thought she was doing enough when she legislated for herself by passing this Act. It must be observed, however, that the Act applies to Ireland as well as England.

In the year 1854 Parliament considered that *regulations* were necessary to further control the companies and passed an important statute, the *Railway and Canal Traffic Act*. Known, for short, in railway parlance, as " the Act of '54," its main provisions dealt with:—

Reasonable facilities for receiving and forwarding traffic
The subject of undue preference, which was forbidden

Railways forming part of continuous lines to receive and forward through traffic without obstruction

The liability of railway companies for loss of, or damage to, goods or animals

and it preserved to railway companies the *protection* of the *Carriers' Act*, to which I have referred.

The Select Committees of 1858 and 1863 sat on the subject of the great length of time and the immense cost which railway promotion in those days entailed, when Bills were fiercely contested, and protracted struggles before Parliamentary Committees took place. Two Acts resulted from their deliberations: the *Railway Companies' Powers Act*, 1864, and the *Railway Construction Facilities Act* of the same year. These Acts empowered railway companies to enter into agreements with each other in regard to maintenance, management, running over or user of each others lines or property and for joint ownership of stations. They also enabled powers to be obtained from the Board of Trade to construct a railway without a special Act of Parliament, subject to the conditions that all the landowners concerned agreed to part with the requisite land, and that no objection was raised by any other railway or canal company. Little use has ever been made of this well-intentioned enactment. Landowners have rarely been disposed to accept terms which the companies thought fair; and rival railways, in the days gone by, dearly loved a fight.

By the *Companies Clauses Consolidation Act* of 1845 railway companies were required to keep full and true accounts of receipts and expenditure, but it was not until the year 1868 that Parliament placed upon the companies an obligation to keep their accounts in a prescribed form. This form was scheduled to the *Regulation of Railways Act*, 1868. It provides for half-yearly accounts, and is the form which has been familiar to shareholders for many years. This Act (1868) also ordained that smoking compartments be provided on all trains, for all classes, on all railways, except on the railway of the Metropolitan Company. Up to then the railway smoker had to obtain the consent of his fellow passengers in the same compartment before he could light up, or brave their displeasure; and many were the altercations that ensued. The Act also imposed penalties on railways who provided

trains for attending prize fights, which was hard on companies of sporting instincts. A clause provided for means of communication between passengers and the servants of the company in charge of trains running twenty miles without stopping; and another clause gave the companies power to cut down trees adjoining their line which might be dangerous. Prior to 1868, although railways had then existed for three and forty years, the accounts of one company could not usefully be compared with those of another, for scarcely any two companies made up their accounts in the same way. Variety may be charming, but uniformity has its advantages.

The Board of Trade, in 1871, was endowed with further powers. By the *Regulation of Railways Act* of that year, they were given additional rights of inspection; authority to enquire into accidents, and further powers in regard to the opening of additional lines of railway, stations or junctions. And by this statute the companies were required to furnish the Board of Trade with elaborate statistical documents, annually, in a form prescribed in a schedule to the Act.

The only other important Act down to the year 1875 is the *Regulation of Railways Act* of 1873. This Act was passed for the purpose of making "better provision for carrying into effect the *Railway and Canal Traffic Act* of 1854, and for other purposes connected therewith." In 1872 a Joint Committee of both Houses sat and, following upon their report, this Act was passed. It established a new tribunal, to be called the *Railway and Canal Commission*, to consist of three Commissioners, of whom—one was to be experienced in the law, one in railway business, and it also authorised the appointment of not more than two *assistant* Commissioners. As to the *third Commissioner*, no mention was made of qualifications. This tribunal, though styled a *Commission*, conducted its work as if it were a court; and a regularly constituted court in time it became. By the *Railway and Canal Traffic Act*, 1888, the section in the Act of 1873 appointing the Commission was repealed and a new Commission established consisting of two appointed and three *ex officio* Commissioners, such Commission to be "a Court of Record, and have an official seal, which shall be judicially noticed." One of the Commissioners must be experienced in railway business; and of the three *ex officio* Commissioners, one was to be nominated for England, one for Scot-

land and one for Ireland, and in each case such Commissioner was to be a Judge of the High Court of the land. Under the Act of 1873, the chief functions of the Commissioners were: To hear and decide upon complaints from the public in regard to undue preference, or to refusal of facilities; to hear and determine questions of through rates; and to settle differences between two railway companies or between a railway company and a canal company, upon the application of either party to the difference. The Act of 1888 continued these and included some further powers.

In my humble opinion the Railway Commissioners have done much useful work and done it well. For more than forty years I have read most if not all the cases they have dealt with. On several occasions I have been engaged in proceedings before them, and not always on the winning side.

CHAPTER X

A General Manager and his Office

January, 1875, was a momentous time for me. In the second week of that month I commenced my new duties at Glasgow and bade farewell for ever to the tall stool and " the dry drudgery of the desk's dead wood." Before me opened a pleasing prospect of attractive and interesting work, brightened by the beams of youthful hope and awakened ambition. I was now chief clerk to a general manager. Was it to be wondered at that I felt proud and elated if also a little scared as to how I should get on.

Mr. Wainwright assumed the office of general manager on the first day of the year. I say *office*, but in fact a general manager's office scarcely existed. His predecessor, Mr. Johnstone, a capable but in some respects a singular man, performed his managerial duties without an office staff, wrote all his own letters, and not only wrote them but first carefully drafted them out in a hand minute almost as Jonathan Swift's. A strenuous worker, Mr. Johnstone, like most men who have no hobby, did not long survive his retirement from active business life.

Mr. Wainwright, who, like myself, was born in Sheffield, was twenty-three years my senior. His early railway life was passed in the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway (now the Great Central), of which the redoubtable Mr. (afterwards Sir) Edward Watkin was then the lively general manager.

A different man to his predecessor was Mr. Wainwright. Unlike Mr.

Johnstone he was modern and progressive. *He* never scorned delights or loved, for their own sake, laborious days; pleasure to him was as welcome as sunshine; and work he made a pleasure.

As I have said, no general manager's *office* existed. Of systematic managerial supervision there was none. What was to be done? Something certainly, and soon. Mr. Wainwright concurred in a suggestion I made that I should visit Derby, see the general manager's office of the Midland there, and learn how *it* was conducted. This I did. E. W. Wells, a principal clerk in that office, who was married to my cousin, showed and told me everything. I returned laden with knowledge which I embodied in a report and my recommendations were adopted. Several clerks were appointed and the general manager's office, of which I was chief clerk, soon became efficient.

Wells afterwards became Assistant General Manager of the Midland, and Frank Tatlow, my cousin and brother of Wells' wife, is now its General Manager, in succession to Sir Guy Granet. I am not a little proud that the attainments of one who bears the name of Tatlow, and is so nearly related to myself, have enabled him to reach the topmost post on a railway such as the Midland Railway of England. He commenced as a junior clerk in the General Manager's office and worked his way step by step to that eminent position. No adventitious circumstances helped him on.

I became fond of railway work, which it seems to me for interest and variety holds a high place among all the occupations by which man, who was born to labour, may earn his daily bread. My duties were certainly arduous but intensely interesting. The correspondence with other railway companies regarding agreements, joint line working, Parliamentary matters, and many other important subjects, conducted as it required to be, with skill, care and precision, was for me a liberal education. The fierce rivalry which, in those days, raged in Scotland for competitive traffic culminated often in disputes which could only be settled by the intervention of the general managers, and these brought much exciting work into the office. Again, the close and intimate relations between the Midland and the Glasgow and South-Western involved interesting communications, meetings and discussions, and the keeping of certain special accounts which it fell to me to supervise.

The Midland and the Glasgow and South-Western alliance was regarded by the West Coast Companies (the London and North-Western and the Caledonian) with much disfavour. In their eyes it was an attack upon their hen roost, and it certainly resulted in the loss to them of a large share of through traffic between England and Scotland which the West Coast route had previously had all to itself. To carry on the competition successfully necessitated a large expenditure of capital by the Glasgow and South-Western, and the Midland, of course, had to help in this. The original cost of Saint Enoch Station for instance was nearly one and three-quarter millions sterling, and a considerable outlay was also necessary for goods stations and other accommodation. There was in those days much doing between the general managers' offices of the Midland and Glasgow and South-Western companies, and it was all delightfully new and novel to me.

A Committee of Directors of the two companies, called the *Midland and Glasgow and South-Western Joint Committee*, was established. This committee, with the two general managers, met periodically either at Derby, London, Carlisle or Glasgow. Mr. Wainwright acted as secretary and I kept the minute book and papers relating to the business of the committee.

Pullman cars had been introduced on the Midland and were run on the through trains between Saint Pancras and Saint Enoch. The cars were the property of Mr. Pullman, but the Midland kept them in repair, the Glasgow and South-Western relieving them of a proportion of the cost corresponding to the mileage run over their line. Mr. Pullman received as his remuneration the extra fare paid by the passengers—three shillings each for drawing-room cars and five shillings each for sleeping cars. Other through carriages on these trains were jointly owned by the two companies. The interesting accounts connected with these arrangements were supervised by me. I commenced work with Mr. Wainwright on a Monday. The following Saturday afternoon, before leaving the office, to my great surprise and delight, he presented me with a first-class station to station pass over the railway. With what pride I showed it to Tom that evening! Six months later my salary was increased, and the pleasant fact was announced to me by my kindly chief, coupled with the expression of a wish that he and I might long work together.

On the Scottish railways the financial half-years ended, not in June and December, as in other parts of the United Kingdom, but at the end of July and January. This was for the better equalisation of receipts, taking a month from the fat half-year to the lean, and giving, in exchange, a month from the lean to the fat. Soon after the first-half-year was concluded and the accounts published, which was in the month of September (my first September with the Glasgow and South-Western), Mr. Wainwright handed to me a large sheet of closely printed figures, giving a detailed analysis and comparison of the accounts of five of the principal English and the three principal Scottish railways in columnar form, with a request that I should take out the figures and compile for printing a similar statement for the past half-year, from the accounts of the eight companies. I trembled inwardly for I had never yet looked at a railway account, but I took them home, and, as in the case of the Acts of Parliament, found them simpler than I thought; and, with less trouble than I expected, succeeded in accomplishing the task.

Mr. Wainwright was himself a skilful statistician and tested everything he could by the cold logic of figures. I was soon surprised to find that I too had a taste for statistics and acquired some skill in their compilation. Up to this I had always imagined that I disliked everything in the shape of arithmetic. At school I was certainly never fond of it, and since school my acquaintance with figures had been little more than the adding up of long columns in huge books at the half-yearly stocktaking in the stores department at St. Rollox, a thing I detested, and which invariably gave me a headache. Well pleased was Mr. Wainwright to see that statistics took my fancy. As general manager he had not much time himself to devote to them, but the office was now well manned and we were able to establish, and keep up, tables, statistics and returns concerning matters of railway working in a way which I have not seen surpassed. These statistics were of much practical use when considering questions of economy and other matters from day to day.

My first year as general manager's clerk was, I have always thought, the most important in my railway life. Certainly in that year I learned much and acquired from my chief business habits which have stood me in good stead since. Mr. Wainwright was a man of no ordinary nature, as all who

knew him will admit. He was a pattern of punctuality and promptitude, never spared himself in doing a thing well and expected the same thoroughness in others, though he would make allowance for want of capacity, but not for indolence or carelessness. Straightforwardness, honesty and rectitude marked all he did. His word was his bond. His disposition was to trust those around him, and his generous confidence was usually justified. High-minded and possessing a keen sense of honor himself, he had an instinctive aversion to anything mean or low in others. A man of great liberality and generous to a fault he often found it hard to say *no*, but when obliged to adopt that attitude it was done with a tact and courtesy which left no sting. In all business matters he required a rigid economy though never at the expense of efficiency.

Intellectually he stood high, as I had ample opportunity of judging, but if asked what were his most striking qualities I should say *goodness* and a charm of manner which eludes description, but irresistibly attracted all who met him. In appearance he was tall and portly, and his bearing, carriage and presence were gentlemanly and refined. He was of fair complexion, was possessed of a delightful smile, and had side whiskers (turning white) continued in the old-fashioned way under the chin, and yet he was so bright and debonair that he never looked old-fashioned. Like myself he was a great lover of Dickens, and I think his most prized possession was a small bookcase which had belonged to Dickens' study and which he purchased at the sale at *Gad's Hill*. His directors esteemed him highly, and the officers of the company were all sincerely attached to him. In his room he held almost daily conferences. Correspondence formed but a small part in his method of dealing with departments. He believed in the value of *viva voce* discussion, and discouraged all unnecessary inter-departmental correspondence. In this he was right I am sure. The daily conferences were cheerful and pleasant, for he had the delightful faculty of " mixing business with pleasure and wisdom with mirth." I consider that I was singularly fortunate at this period of my life in finding myself placed in close and intimate association with such a man as Mr. Wainwright, in enjoying his confidence as I did, and in being afforded the opportunity of benefitting by his kind precepts and fine example.

To face page 60.

W. J. WAINWRIGHT

In Glasgow there was a weekly paper of much humour and spirit called *The Bailie*. With each issue it published an article on some prominent man of the day under the title of *Men You Know*, accompanied by a portrait of the person selected. It is the Glasgow *Punch*. It was established in 1873, and "*Ma Conscience!*" is its motto. It still, I am glad to hear, runs an honorable and profitable course, which its merits well deserve. In its issue of September 13th, 1882, Mr. Wainwright was *The Man You Know*, and, at the request of the Editor, I wrote the article upon him. In it are some words which, penned when I was with him daily, and his influence was strong upon me, are, perhaps, more true and faithful than any I could at this distance of time write, and so I will quote them here, and with them conclude this chapter.

"He (*The Man You Know*) is one upon whom responsibility rests gracefully and lightly, who accomplishes great things without apparent effort, and whose personal influence smoothes the daily friction of official life. He rules with a gentler sway than many who are accustomed to other methods of command would believe possible. He believes in Emerson's maxim that if you deal nobly with men they will act nobly, and his habit towards everyone around him, and its success, lends force to the genial truth of the American philosopher."

CHAPTER XI

The Railway Jubilee, and Glasgow and South-Western Officers and Clerks

The 27th day of September, 1875, was the Jubilee of the British Railway System. It was celebrated by a banquet given by the North-Eastern Railway Company at Darlington, for the Stockton and Darlington section of the North-Eastern was, as I have mentioned before, the first public railway. A thousand guests were invited. No building in Darlington could accommodate such a number, and a great marquee, large enough to dine a thousand people, was obtained from London. My chief attended the banquet and I remained at home to hear the news when he returned. Dan Godfrey's band was there, and Dan Godfrey himself composed some music for the occasion. The *menu* was long, elaborate and imposing; equalled only by the *toast list*, which contained no less than sixteen separate toasts. It was a Gargantuan feast befitting a great occasion. Could we men of to-day have done it justice and sat it and the toast list out I wonder. It took place over forty years ago, when the endurance of the race was, perhaps, greater than now; or why do we now shorten our banquets and shirk the bottle?

The Stockton and Darlington Railway is 54 miles long, and its authorised capital was £102,000—a modest sum indeed, under £2,000 per mile, less than half the outlay for land alone of the North Midland line and not one twenty-fifth of the average cost of British railways as they stand to-day, which is some £57,000 per mile. The railway owed its origin to George Stephenson and to Edward Pease, the wealthy Quaker and manufacturer of Darlington,

both burly men, strong in mind as body. The first rail was laid, with much ceremony, near the town of Stockton, on the 23rd of May, 1822, amid great opposition culminating in acts of personal violence, for the early railways, from interests that feared their rivalry, and often from sheer blind ignorance itself, had bitter antagonism to contend with.

The day brought an immense concourse of people to Darlington, all bent on seeing the novel spectacle of a train of carriages and wagons filled with passengers and goods, drawn along a *railway* by a *steam* engine. At eight o'clock in the morning the train started with its load—22 vehicles—hauled by Stephenson's "Locomotion," driven by Stephenson himself. "Such was its velocity that in some parts of the journey the speed was frequently 12 miles an hour." The number of passengers reached 450, and the goods and merchandise amounted to 90 tons—a great accomplishment, and George Stephenson and Edward Pease were proud men that day.

Seven years from this present time will witness the *Centenary* of the railway system. How shall we celebrate *it*? Will railway proprietor, railway director and railway manager on that occasion be animated with the gladness, the pride and the hope that brightened the Jubilee Banquet? Who can tell? The future of railways is all uncertain.

A word or two regarding the railway system of Scotland may not be inappropriate.

Scotland has eight *working* railway companies, England and Wales 104, and Ireland 28. These include light railways, but are exclusive of all railways, light or ordinary, that are worked not by themselves but by other companies. Scotland has exhibited her usual good sense, her canny, thrifty way, by keeping the number of *operating* railway companies within such moderate bounds. Ireland does not show so well, and England relatively is almost as bad as Ireland, yet England might well have shown the path of prudence to her poorer sister by greater adventure herself in the sensible domain of railway amalgamation. Much undeserved censure has been heaped upon the Irish lines; sins have been assumed from which they are free, and their virtues have ever been ignored. John Bright once said that "Railways have rendered more service and received less gratitude than any institution in the land." This is certainly true of Ireland, for nothing has

ever conferred such benefit upon that country as its railways, and nothing, except perhaps the Government, has received so much abuse. On this I shall have more to say when I reach the period of the Vice-Regal Commission on Irish Railways, appointed in 1906.

The average number of miles *operated* per working railway company in Scotland compared with England and Wales and Ireland, are:—

Scotland	477
England and Wales	156
Ireland	121

and the mileage, capital, revenue, expenditure, interest and dividends for 1912, the latest year of which the figures, owing to the war, are published by the Board of Trade, are as follows:—

	Miles.	Capital.	Revenue.	Expenditure.	Average rate of interest and dividend.
		£	£	£	Per cent.
England and Wales	16,223	1,103,310,000	110,499,000	70,499,000	3·58
Scotland	3,815	186,304,000	13,508,000	7,882,000	3·07
Ireland	3,403	45,349,000	4,545,000	2,842,000	3·83

The General Manager of the Glasgow and South-Western Railway and his office I have described, but I have not spoken, except in a general way, of the other principal officers, with whom, as Mr. Wainwright's assistant, I came into close and intimate relationship. They, alas! are no more. I have outlived them all. Each has played his part, and made, as we all must do, his exit from the stage of life.

Prominent amongst these officers was John Mathieson, Superintendent of the Line, who was only twenty-nine when appointed to that responsible post. We became good friends. He began work at the early age of thirteen, had grown up on the railway and at nineteen was a station master. He was skilful in out-door railway work, and an adept in managing trains and traffic. Ambitious and a bit touchy regarding his office, all was not always peace between his and other departments, particularly the goods manager's. The goods manager was not aggressive, and it was sometimes thought that Mathieson inclined to encroach upon his territory. Often angry correspond-

ence and sometimes angry discussion ensued. Yet, take him for all in all, John Mathieson was a fine man with nothing small in his composition. Soon his ambition was gratified. In 1889 he was appointed Chief Commissioner of the Railways of Queensland; and after a few years occupation of that post was invited by the Victorian Government to the same position in connection with the railways of that important State. In 1900 he left Australia and became General Manager of the Midland Railway; but his health unfortunately soon failed, and at the comparatively early age of sixty he died at Derby in the year 1906. In his early days, on the Glasgow and South-Western, Mathieson was a hard fighter. Those were the days when between the Scottish railway companies the keenest rivalry and the bitterest competition existed. The Clearing House in London, where the railway representatives met periodically to discuss and arrange rates and fares and matters relating to traffic generally, was the scene of many a battle. Men like James MacLaren of the North British, Tom Robertson of the Highland, Irvine Kempt of the Caledonian, and A. G. Reid of the Great North of Scotland were worthy of Mathieson's steel. Usually Mathieson held his own. Irvine Kempt I cannot imagine was as keen a fighter as the rest, for he was rather a dignified gentleman with fine manners. To gain a few tons of fish from a rival route, by superior service, keen canvassing, or by other less legitimate means, was a source of fierce joy to these ardent spirits. The disputes were sometimes concerned with through traffic between England and Scotland, and then the English railway representatives took part, but not with the keeness and intensity of their northern brethren, for the Saxon blood has not the fiery quality of the crimson stream that courses through the veins of the Celt. Now all is changed. Combination has succeeded to competition, alliances and agreements are the tranquil order of the day, and the Clearing House has become a Temple of Peace.

Between David Dickie, Goods Manager, and John Mathieson, Passenger Superintendent, as I have said, many differences arose. I sometimes thought that Mathieson might well have shown more consideration to one so much his senior in years as Dickie was. Poor Dickie! Before I left Scotland he met a tragic death. He was a kind-hearted man, a canny Scot, and died rich.

James Stirling was the Locomotive Superintendent. He and Mathieson

did not always agree, and the clash of arms frequently raged between them. Mr. Wainwright's suavity often, and not infrequently his authority, were required to adjust these domestic broils, but as all deferred to him willingly, the storms that arose were usually short lived.

In 1878 Mathieson and I took a short holiday together and crossed to Ireland. It was our first visit to that unquiet but delightful country, in which, little as I thought then, I was destined a few years later to make my home.

It was in January, 1879, that the headquarters of the company were removed from the old and narrow Bridge Street Station to the new palatial St. Enoch, and there a splendid set of offices was provided. This was another advantage much to my taste. St. Enoch was and is certainly a most handsome and commodious terminus. Originally it had one great roof of a single span, second only to that of St. Pancras Station. Other spans, not so great, have since been added, for the business of St. Enoch rapidly grew, and enlarged accommodation soon became necessary. In 1879 it had six long and spacious platforms, now it has twelve; then the number of trains in and out was 43 daily, now it has reached 286; then the mileage of the railway was 319, now it is 466; then the employees of the company numbered 4,010 and now they are over 10,000. These figures exemplify the material growth of industrial Scotland in the forty years that have passed. St. Enoch Station was not disfigured by trade advertisements, and it is with great satisfaction I learn that the same good taste has prevailed to this day. Not long after it was opened a great grocery and provision firm, the knightly head of which is still a well-known name, offered to the company a large annual sum for the use of the space under the platform clock, which could be seen from all parts of the station, which the directors, on the representation of their general manager, declined; and I am proud to remember that my own views on the subject, pretty forcibly expressed, when my chief discussed the subject with me, strengthened his convictions and helped to carry the day in the board room. The indiscriminate and inartistic way in which throughout the land advertisements of all sorts crowd our station walls and platforms is an outrage on good taste. If advertisements *must* appear there, some hand and eye endowed with the rudiments of art ought to control them. In no

country in the world does the same ugly display mar the appearance of railway stations; and considering what myriad eyes daily rest on station premises it is well worth while on æsthetic grounds to make their appearance as pleasant and as little vulgar as possible. The question of revenue to the companies need not be ignored for proper and efficient control would produce order, moderation, neatness, artistic effect—and profit.

With the principal clerks of the office staff my relations were very pleasant. The consideration with which I was treated by my chief, and the footing upon which I stood with him, gave me a certain influence which otherwise I should not have possessed. Till then there had been absent from the company's staff any gathering together for purposes of common interest or mutual enjoyment. The *Railway Benevolent Institution* provided a rallying point. I had been appointed its representative on the Glasgow and South-Western Railway and we held meetings and arranged concerts in its aid. Then, after a time, we established for the principal clerks and goods agents and certain grades of station masters, an annual day excursion into the country, with a dinner and songs and speeches. "Tatlow is good at the speak," said publicly one of my colleagues, in his broad Scotch way, and so far as it was true this I daresay helped me. I was made permanent president of these excursions and feasts, and often had to "hold forth," which I must confess I rather enjoyed. We christened ourselves *The Railway Ramblers*. The fact that I became the Scotch correspondent of the *Railway Official Gazette*, a regular contributor to the *Railway News*, and had access to the columns of several newspapers, enabled reports of our doings to appear in print, and diffused some pleasure and pride throughout the service. Also I became a weekly contributor of *Scotch Notes* to the *Montreal Herald*. In the *Railway Official Gazette* was a column devoted to short reviews of new books which were sent to the editor. For a time, from some reason or other, I undertook this reviewing. Possession of the books was the only recompense, though for all other work payment in money was made. It was a daring thing on my part and I am sure many a reader of the paper must have smiled at my criticisms. I forget why I soon gave up the duty; probably from incompetence, for I am sure I was not at all qualified for such a task; but what will the audacity of youth not attempt? This journalistic

work occupied much of my spare time, but it supplemented my income, a consideration of no little importance, for in October, 1876, I had entered the married state. My wife came from the Midlands of England. My friends became her friends, and other friends we made. Children soon appeared on the scene; my bachelor days were over.

Societies amongst the staff of a railway company, whether for the purpose of physical recreation, for mutual improvement or for social enjoyment are to be much commended. The assembling together of employees of various ages, filling various positions, from the several departments, from different districts, freed from business, and mixing on equal terms for common objects, promotes good feeling and good fellowship, provides pleasant memories for after life, gives a zest to work, and adds to the efficiency of the service.

Amongst all my fellow clerks I remember one only who resembled as a borrower some of my quondom associates at Derby. But this was in Scotland where more provident ways prevailed. He was a married man, about 30 years of age, with a salary of £100 a year. By no means what one would call a nice fellow, he had nothing of the *bonhomie* or light-hearted good nature that distinguished my Derby friends. He possessed a good figure, wore fierce moustaches, and affected a military air. One suit of well-made, well-cut clothes by some means or other he managed to keep in a state of freshness and smoothness nothing short of marvellous. Borrowing was his besetting sin, and he was always head over ears in debt. Duns pursued him to the office and he sometimes hid from them in a huge safe which the office contained. It was a wretched life, but he brazened it out with wonderful effrontery, and, outwardly, seemed happy enough. From all who would lend he borrowed, and rarely I believe repaid. Once I was his victim, but only once. I lent him £3, and, strange to say, he returned it. Of course he approached me again, but I had read and digested the *master's* wisdom and determined to " neither a borrower nor a lender be."

Prominent amongst the principal clerks was David Cooper. When I left Glasgow he succeeded me as assistant to the general manager. Now he is general manager of the company himself. Recently he celebrated his 50th year of railway service. Like me, he entered railway life in 1867; but,

unlike me, has not been a rolling stone. One company only he has served and served it well, and for nearly a quarter of a century has filled the highest office it has to bestow. He and I have been more fortunate than many of our old-time colleagues. In the list of officers of the Glasgow and South-Western to-day I see the names of two only, besides David Cooper, who were principal clerks in those days—F. H. Gillies, now secretary of the company, and George Russell, Telegraph Superintendent.

In railways, as in other departments of life, ability and industry usually have their reward; but alone they do not always command success. Other factors there are in the equation of life and not least luck and opportunity. In those distant days, in the pride of youth, I was too apt to think that they who succeeded owed their success to themselves alone; but the years have taught me that this is not always so, and I have learned to sympathise more and more with those to whom opportunity has never held out her hand and upon whom good luck has never smiled.

CHAPTER XII

Tom

In the last few chapters I have made but little mention of Tom. The time was drawing nearer when I was to lose him for ever. Until early in 1876 we lived together in the closest intimacy. We pooled our resources, and when either ran short of money, which often happened, the common purse, if it were not empty, was always available. Similar in height and in figure, our clothes, except our hats, boots and gloves, in each of which I took a larger size than he, were, when occasion required, interchangeable. We standardised our wardrobe as far as we could. We rose together, ate together, retired together, and, except during business hours, were rarely apart. I being, he considered, the more prudent in money matters, kept our lodging accounts and paid the bills. He being more musical, and a greater lover of the drama than I, arranged our visits to the theatres and concert halls. I was the practical, he the æsthetical controller of our joint menage. Once I remember—this occurred before we left Derby—we both fancied ourselves in love with the same dear enchantress, a certain dark-eyed brunette. Each punctually paid his court, as opportunity offered, and each, when he could, most obligingly furthered the suit of the other; and this went on till the time arrived for Tom's departure to Glasgow, when I was left in possession of the field. Then I discovered, to my surprise, that I was not so deeply enamoured as I had imagined; and, curiously enough, Tom on his part had no sooner settled in Scotland than he made a similar discovery.

The climate of Glasgow never suited Tom's health and in 1876, on the advice of his doctors, he decided to return to England. For a time he seemed to regain his health, but only for a time. Soon he relapsed, and before another year dawned it became evident, if not to himself, to his friends, that his years on earth were numbered. With what grief I heard the news, which came to me from his parents, I need not say. Bravely for a while he struggled with work, but all in vain; he had to give in, and return to his parents' home in Lincolnshire. That home he never again left, except once, in the summer of 1877, to visit my wife and me, when he stayed with us for several weeks. Though greatly reduced and very thin, and capable only of short walks he was otherwise unchanged; the lively fancy, the bright humor and the sparkling wit, which made him so delightful a companion, were scarcely diminished. He himself was hopeful; talked of recovery, planned excursions which he and I should take together when his health returned; but his greatest pleasure was in recalling our Derby days, our *Maypole* visits, our country rambles, our occasional dances and flirtations, and our auld acquaintances generally.

Tom was remarkable for the quickness of his observation, for keen penetration of character, and for happy humorous description of particular traits in those he met. He possessed, too, a wonderfully retentive memory. It is largely due to his lively descriptions of our interesting fellow clerks at Derby that I have been able, after the lapse of half a century, to sketch them with the fidelity I have. His humorous accounts of their peculiarities often enlivened the hours we spent together, and impressed their personalities more forcibly on my mind than they otherwise would have been.

When his visit came to an end, and he returned to his home, I too indulged in the hope that he might regain some measure of health, for he seemed much improved. But it was a temporary improvement only, due in part, perhaps, to change in environment, and in part to the exhilaration arising from our reunion, heart and mind for a time dominating the body and stimulating it to an activity which produced this fair but deceptive semblance of health. His letters to me breathed the spirit of hope till almost the last. We never met again. The intention I had cherished of going to see him was never fulfilled. The illness of my wife and the death of one of

our children, and other unfortunate causes, prevented it; and in little more than a year and a half from our farewell grasp of the hand at the railway station in Glasgow my dear and beloved friend breathed his last. Often and often since I have heard again the music of his voice, have seen his face smiling upon me, and have felt

> *"His being working in mine own,*
> *The footsteps of his life in mine."*

CHAPTER XIII

Men I Met and Friends I Made

Ten years I served the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company as chief clerk, or as Mr. Wainwright euphemistically called it, *assistant* to the general manager. In that position I met from time to time, not only many prominent railway men, but also other men of mark.

Amongst these, two stand out with great distinction because of the effect they had upon me at a memorable interview I had with each. I never forgot those interviews, and nothing that ever occurred in my life tended to strengthen in me the quality of self-reliance so much as they did. Their effect was sudden, inspiring and lasting. These well-remembered men were Mr. John Burns (afterwards the first Lord Inverclyde), head of the shipping firm of G. and J. Burns, and chairman of the Cunard Line, and Mr. John Walker, General Manager of the North British Railway. The interviews occurred, as nearly as I recollect, during the second or third year of my Glasgow and South-Western life, and took place within a few weeks of each other.

John Burns was one of the largest shareholders in the Glasgow and South-Western Railway, his steamers plied between Greenock and Belfast, and his relations with the company were intimate and friendly. At the time I speak of some important negotiations were proceeding between him and Mr. Wainwright concerning the company and his firm, and whilst they were at their height Mr. Wainwright was unexpectedly summoned to London

and detained there. Now Mr. Burns was a man who greatly disliked delay, and I was told to see him and, if he wished, discuss the business with him, and, if possible, further its progress. It was the way in which Mr. Burns received me, young and inexperienced as I was, the manner in which he discussed the subject and encouraged me, and the respect with which he listened to my arguments, that surprised and delighted me. I left him, feeling an elation of spirit, a glow of pride, a confidence in myself, as new as it was unexpected. It is a fine trait in Scotchmen that, deeply respecting themselves, they respect others. Difference of class or position does not count much with them in comparison with merit or sterling worth—

" The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that."

Mr. Burns was a striking personality; strong and vigorous, mentally and physically. He had a good voice, and was clear, decided and emphatic in speech. He was a doughty champion of the Glasgow and South-Western Company, with which at this time, affairs, like the course of true love, did not run smooth. The dividend was down and discontented shareholders were up in arms. Bitter attacks were made on the directors and the management. Not that anything was really wrong, for the business of the line was skilfully and honestly conducted, but the times were bad, and " empty stalls make biting steeds." The very same shareholders who, when returns are satisfactory, are as gentle as cooing doves, should revenue and expenditure alter their relations to the detriment of dividend, become critical, carping and impossible to please, though the directors and management may be as innocent as themselves, and as powerless to stem the tide of adversity. At shareholders' meetings Mr. Burns was splendid. He rose after the critics had expended their force, or if the storm grew too violent, intervened at its height, and with facts and figures and sound argument always succeeded in restoring order and serenity. An excellent story of him appeared about this time in *Good Words*. He, Anthony Trollope and Norman Macleod were once at a little inn in the Highlands. After supper, stories were told and the laughter, which was loud and long, lasted far into the night. In the morning an old gentleman, who slept in a room above them, complained

to the landlord of the uproar which had broken his night's rest, and expressed his astonishment that such men should have taken more than was good for them. "Well," replied the landlord, "I am bound to confess there was much loud talk and laughter, but they had nothing stronger than tea and fresh herrings." "Bless me," rejoined the old gentleman, "if that is so, what would they be after dinner!"

In the entrance hall of the North British Railway Company's Waverley station at Edinburgh stands the statue, in bronze, of Mr. John Walker. As far as I know this is, the whole world over, the only instance in which the memory of a railway general manager has been so honoured. It is of heroic size and eloquently attests his worth. He was born in Fifeshire in 1832, and died with startling suddenness from an apoplectic seizure, at the age of fifty-nine, at Waterloo station in London. When he left school he was apprenticed to the law, but at the age of nineteen entered the service of the Edinburgh, Perth and Dundee Railway. This railway was in 1862 amalgamated with the original North British, which was first authorised in 1844, and extended from Edinburgh to Berwick. His exceptional ability was soon recognised and his promotion was rapid. He became treasurer of the amalgamated company, and in 1866 was appointed its secretary. In this office he rendered great service at a trying time in the company's affairs, and in 1874 was rewarded with the position of general manager.

The North British Railway has had a chequered career, has suffered great changes of fortune, and to Mr. Walker, more than to any other, is due the stability it now enjoys. On the occasion of his death, the directors officially recorded that, "He served the company with such ability and unselfish devotion as is rarely witnessed; became first secretary and subsequently general manager, and it was during the tenure of these offices that the remarkable development of the company's system was mainly effected."

His capacity for work was astounding. He never seemed to tire or to know what fatigue meant. Ordinary men are disposed to pleasure as well as to work, to recreation and social intercourse as well as to business, but this was not the case with Mr. Walker. It must be confessed that he was somewhat exacting with his staff, but his own example was a stimulus to exertion in others and he was well served. One who knew him well, and for many

years was closely associated with him in railway work, tells me that his most striking characteristics were reticence, combativeness, concentration and tenacity of purpose, and that his memory and mastery of detail were remarkable. Deficient perhaps in sentiment, though in such silent men deep wells of feeling often unsuspectedly exist, he was, by those who served under him, always recognised as fair and just, and no one had ever to complain of the slightest discourtesy at his hands. Like Lord Byron, he was lame from birth, and while this may have affected his character and pursuits, it never, I am told, in business, which indeed was practically his sole occupation, impeded his activity. On the failure of the City of Glasgow Bank, in 1878, which involved in ruin numbers of people, he lost a considerable fortune. He was a large shareholder of the bank, and the liability of the shareholders was unlimited. He faced his loss with stoical fortitude, as I believe he would have confronted any disaster that life could bring.

On a certain day Mr. Walker came to Glasgow by appointment to discuss with Mr. Wainwright some outstanding matters which they had failed to settle by correspondence. In the afternoon Mr. Wainwright had an important meeting of his directors to attend. The business with Mr. Walker was concluded in time, all but one subject, and Mr. Wainwright asked Mr. Walker if he would let me go into this with him. Without the least hesitation he consented; and he treated me as Mr. John Burns had done, and discussed the matter with me as if I were on an equal footing. This was the interview that strengthened and confirmed that self-reliance which Mr. Burns had awakened, and which never afterwards forsook me. Great is my debt to Scotland and to Scotchmen.

Amongst the most prominent railway men I have met were Sir Edward Watkin, Chairman of the South-Eastern Railway, and the following general managers:—Mr. Allport, Midland, the exalted railway monarch of my early railway days; Mr. (afterwards Sir) Henry Oakley, Great Northern; Mr. Grierson, Great Western; Mr. Underdown, Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire; and Mr. (afterwards Sir Myles) Fenton, South Eastern. Of Sir Edward Watkin a good story was told. When he was general manager of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway (he was Mr. Watkin then) many complaints had arisen from coal merchants on the line that coal was being

stolen from wagons in transit by engine drivers. Nothing so disgraceful could possibly occur, always answered Mr. Watkin. Down the line one day, with his officers at a country station, a driver was seen in the very act of transferring from a coal wagon standing on an outlying siding some good big lumps to his tender. This was pointed out to Mr. Watkin, who only said—"The d——d fool, *in broad daylight!*" When Mr. Allport learned that I came from Derby, and was the son of an old Midland official, he treated me with marked kindness. Mr. Oakley came in the year 1880 to Glasgow, where he sat for several days as arbitrator between the Glasgow and South-Western and Caledonian Railway Companies, on a matter concerning the management, working, and maintenance of Kilmarnock Station, of which the companies were joint owners, and I learned for the first time how an arbitration case should be conducted, for Mr. Oakley was an expert at such work. This experience stood me in good stead, when, not many years later, I was appointed arbitrator in a railway dispute in the North of Ireland.

In the front rank of the railway service I do not remember many beaux. General managers were men too busy to spend much time upon the study of dress. But there were exceptions, as there are to every rule, and Sir James Thompson, General Manager, and afterwards Chairman of the Caledonian Railway, was a notable exception. Often, after attending Clearing House meetings or Parliamentary Committees, have I met him in Piccadilly, Bond Street, or the Burlington Arcade, faultlessly and fashionably attired in the best taste, airing himself, admiring and admired. We always stopped and talked; of the topics of the day, the weather, what a pleasant place London was, how handsome the women, how well dressed the men. At the Clearing House we usually sat next each other. I liked him and I think he liked me. Do not think he was a beau and nothing more. No, he was a hard-headed Scotchman, full of ability and work, and as a railway manager stood at the top of the ladder. Next to him Sir Frederick Harrison, General Manager of the London and North-Western Railway, was, I think, the best dressed railway man. Both he and Sir James were tall, handsome fellows, and I confess to having admired them, perhaps as much for their good looks and their taste and style, as for their intellectual qualities; and I have often thought that men in high positions would not do amiss to pay

some attention to old Polonius' admonition to his son that, " the apparel oft proclaims the man."

In the friends I made I was fortunate too. They included two or three budding lawyers, a young engineer, a banker, a doctor, two embryo hotel managers, an auctioneer, and one or two journalists; and, as I have mentioned before, my artist friend *Cynicus*. We were, most of us, friends of each other, met often, and the variety of our pursuits gave zest and interest to our intercourse. First amongst these friends ranked G. G., one of the young lawyers, or *writers*, as they are called in Scotland. He was my closest friend. We have not met for many years, but the friendship remains unweakened; for there are things that Time the destroyer is powerless to injure. Like myself, G. G. comes of the middle class. His parents, like mine, were by no means affluent, but they were Scotch and held education in veneration, and were ambitious, as Scottish parents are, for their sons. They gave him a University education, and afterwards apprenticed him to the law. He became, and is still, a prosperous lawyer in Glasgow.

Then came J. B., a young lawyer too, who blossomed into the pleasant and important position of Senior Deputy Town Clerk of the City of Glasgow. He, too, had sprung from the great middle class. Well versed in classical lore he was a delightful companion. He had travelled much and benefited by his travels; was a sociable being, exceedingly good-natured, and peered through spectacles as thick as pebbles, being very short-sighted, and without his glasses would scarcely recognise you a yard off. Yet he could see into the heart of things as well as most men, for he was a shrewd Scotchman, and had a pawky humour. If he possessed a fault it was a love for a game of cards. We played *nap* in those days, and when a game was on it was hard to get him to bed. He has gone over to the majority now. His sudden death a year ago came as a great blow to his family and a large circle of friends. Next to G. G., as intimate friends, came H. H. and F. K. They were in the company's service though not in the railway proper, but connected with the management of the hotel department. Of foreign birth, sons of a nation with whom we are now, alas! at war, they were youths of fine education, disposition and refinement, and I became greatly attached to each. H. H. preceded and F. K. followed me to Ireland, where he (F. K.)

still resides, honoured and respected, as he deserves to be. He and I, throughout the years, have been and are the closest of friends. Once, not so very long ago, in a grave crisis of my life, when death seemed near, he stood by me with the devotion of a brother. My auctioneer friend (G. F.) was, perhaps, the most interesting man of our circle; certainly he possessed more humour than the rest of us put together. Fond of literature, with a talent for writing, he was a regular contributor to the Glasgow Punch, *The Bailie*. But his greatest charms were, his dear innocence, his freshness of mind, his simple inexpensive tastes, his enjoyment of life, and his infectious laugh. In years he was our senior, but in worldly knowledge junior to us all. He lives still and is, I believe, as jocund as ever. Another of these Glasgow friends I must mention—a poet, and like Burns, a son of the soil. His name was Alexander Anderson. When first I met him he was in the railway service, a labourer on the permanent way, what is called a surfaceman in Scotland, a platelayer in England and a milesman in Ireland. Self-taught, he became proficient in French, German and Italian, and was able to enjoy in their own language the literature of those countries. A Scottish nobleman, impressed by his wonderful poetical talent, defrayed the expenses of a tour which he made in Italy and an extended stay in Rome, to the enrichment of his mind and to his great enjoyment. On his return to Scotland he published a book of poems. In an introduction to this book the Revd. George Gilfillan wrote, " The volume he now presents to the world is distinguished by great variety of subject and modes of treatment. It has a number of sweet Scottish verses, plaintive or pawky. It has some strains of a higher mood, reminding us of Keats in their imagination. But the highest effort, if not also the most decided success, is his series of sonnets, entitled, ' In Rome.' And certainly this is a remarkable series." A remarkable man he was indeed; simple and earnest in manner, with a fine eye, a full dark beard and sunburnt face. Tiring, however, of a labourer's life and of the pick and shovel, he left the railway and became assistant librarian of Edinburgh University, and three years afterwards Secretary to the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh. He afterwards became Chief Librarian to the Edinburgh University. He died in the summer of 1909. He stayed with me in Glasgow once for a week-end, and on the Sunday afternoon we

together visited a friend of his who lived near, a literary man, who then was engaged in writing a series of lives of the Poets for some publishing house. An interesting part of our conversation was about Carlyle with whom this friend was intimate, had in fact just returned from visiting him at Chelsea. He told us many interesting stories of the sage. I remember one. He was staying with the Carlyles, when Mrs. Carlyle was alive. One evening at tea, a copper kettle, with hot water, stood on the hob. Mrs. Carlyle made a movement as if to rise, with her eye directed to the kettle; the friend, divining her wish, rose and handed her the kettle. She thanked him, and, with a pathetic and wistful gaze at Carlyle, added, " Ay, Tam, ye never did the like o' that!"

My first trip abroad was in 1883, and my companion, G. G. We went to Paris *via* Newhaven, Dieppe and Rouen, and at Rouen stayed a day and a night, and spent about a fortnight in Paris. We were accompanied from London by a friend I have not yet named, one who was well known in the railway world, Tony Visinet, the British Engineering and Commercial Agent of the Western Railway of France; a delightful companion always, full of the charm and vivacity that belong to his country. He took us to see his mother at Rouen, who lived in an old-fashioned house retired from the road, in a pleasant court-yard; a charming old lady, with whom G. G. was able to converse, but I was not. Toney Visinet's life was full of movement and variety. He had lodgings in London, and a flat in Paris, traversed the Channel continually, and I remember his proudly celebrating his fifteen hundredth crossing.

From childhood I had longed to see something of the world, and this excursion to Paris was the first gratification of that wish. Paris now is as familiar to me almost as London, but then was strange and new. Rouen and its cathedral we first saw by moonlight, a beautiful and impressive sight, idealised to me by the thought that we were in sunny France. Little I imagined then how much of the world in later years I should see; but strong desires often accomplish their own fulfilment, and so it came to pass.

CHAPTER XIV

Terminals, Rates and Fares, and other Matters

Of course it was right that Parliament, when conferring upon the railway companies certain privileges, such as the compulsory acquisition of land and property, should, in the public interest, impose restrictions on their charging powers. No one could reasonably complain of this, and had it been done from the beginning in a clear, logical way, and in language free from doubt, all might have been well and much subsequent trouble avoided. But this was not the case. Each company's charging powers were contained in its own private Acts (which were usually very numerous) and differed for different sections of the railway. It was often impossible for the public to ascertain the rights of the companies, and well nigh impossible for the companies themselves to know what they were. These powers were in the form of tolls for the use of the railway; charges for the use of carriages, wagons, and locomotive power, and total maximum charges which were less than the sum of the several charges. In the Acts no mention was made of terminals, though in some of them power to make a charge for *services incidental to conveyance* was authorised, and what these words really meant was the subject of much legal argument and great forensic expenditure.

In addition to the tolls and charges, the Acts usually contained a rough classification of goods to which they applied. These were divided into from three to five classes, and comprised some 50 to 60 articles. The railway companies, however, had in existence, for practical everyday use, a general

classification called The Railway Clearing House Classification, and this contained over 2,700 articles divided into seven classes.

The tolls and charges in the Companies' Acts were fixed originally in the old belief (to which I have before alluded) that railway companies, like canal companies, would be mere owners of the route; and when they became carriers and provided stations, sidings, warehouses, cranes, and all the paraphernalia appertaining to the business of a carrier, the old form was not altered, the charging powers remained as originally expressed in subsequent Acts, and the same old model was followed. For several years prior to 1881 complaints by merchants, traders and public bodies against railway rates and fares had become very common. The cry was taken up by the public generally, and railway companies had a decidedly unpleasant time of it, which they bore with that good temper and equanimity which I (perhaps not altogether an unprejudiced witness) venture to affirm generally characterised them. The complaints increased in number and intensity and Members of Parliament and newspaper writers joined in the jeremiad.

Parliament, as Parliaments do, yielded to clamour, and in 1881 a Select Committee was appointed by the House of Commons to inquire into railway charges, into the laws and conditions affecting such charges, and specially into passenger fares. It was a big committee, consisted of 23 members, took 858 pages of evidence, and examined 80 witnesses. At the end of the session they reported that, although they had sat continuously, time had failed for consideration of the evidence, and recommended that the committee be re-appointed in the next session. This was done, and the committee, enlarged to 27 members, took further evidence, and submitted a report to Parliament.

The gravest issue was the right of the companies to charge terminals, and the committee found that the railways had made out their case, and recommended that the right of the companies to station terminals should be recognised by Parliament. Further, the committee, on the whole of the evidence, acquitted the railway companies of any grave dereliction of their duty to the public, and added: " It is remarkable that no witnesses have appeared to complain of ' preferences ' given to individuals by railway com-

panies as acts of private favour or partiality." As to passenger fares, the committee reported that the complaints submitted to them were rather local than general, and not of an important character, but thought that it might be well for the Railway Commissioners to have the same jurisdiction in respect to passengers as to goods traffic.

The railway companies thus emerged from this searching inquiry with credit, as they have done in the many investigations to which they have been subjected, and no high-minded and aspiring young railway novice need ever blush for the traditions of the service.

Before the committee Mr. James Grierson, General Manager of the Great Western, was the principal witness for the railway companies, and yeoman service be rendered. He presented the railway case with great ability, and his views were accepted on the important terminal question. In 1886 he published a book on *Railway Rates*, which was warmly welcomed by the Press and, in the words of *Herepath's Journal*, was " an exhaustive, able, and dispassionate *résumé* of all the conflicting statements, claims, and interests verging round the much vexed question of railway rates." Certainly he did much towards the ultimate settlement of the matter. Mr. Grierson was, perhaps, the ablest witness before Parliamentary Committees the railway service ever had, which is saying much. A leading counsel, during the luncheon interval, once said to him, " We feel small when we are cross-examining you. You know all about the business, and we can only touch the fringe of it." The great secret of Mr. Grierson's success was his mastery of, and scrupulous regard for, facts and his straightforwardness. Of his book he himself said, " My conclusions may be disputed, but no one shall dispute the facts on which they are based."

The committee recommended that Parliament, when authorising new lines, or extending the powers of existing companies, should have its attention drawn by some public authority to the proposed, and in the case of existing companies, to the existing rates and fares. They also recommended that one uniform classification of merchandise be established by law; that the Court of Railway Commissioners be made permanent; and that the amalgamation of Irish Railways be promoted and facilitated. Thus the great inquiry ended; but public agitation did not cease. One or two attempts

at legislation followed, but from one cause or another, fell through; and it was not until 1888 that the subject was seriously tackled by Parliament. In that year the *Railway and Canal Traffic Act*, of which I shall later on have something to say, was passed.

On the appearance of the Report in 1882, it was recognised in railway circles that something *must* happen regarding the eternal rates question, and the companies began to prepare themselves as best they could. It fell upon me to examine the many Acts of Parliament of the Glasgow and South-Western Railway, to collate the provisions relating to tolls, charges and maximum powers, to compare those powers with actual rates, to work out cost of terminal service, and to draw up a revised proposed scale of maximum conveyance rates and terminal charges. Deeply interesting work it was, and led, not very many years afterwards, to unexpected promotion, which I valued much, and about which I shall have more to say.

In the year 1880 a Scotch branch of the Railway Benevolent Institution was established. Mr. Wainwright was made its chairman, and I was appointed secretary. He and I had for some time urged upon the Board in London the desirability of a local committee of management in Scotland. The Institution had a great membership in England, and was generously helped there in the matter of funds by the public. The subscription payable by members was small, and the benefits it bestowed were substantial; but railway men in Scotland looked at it askance: "the Board in London kenned little aboot Scotland and Scotch claims wouldna get vera much conseederation." Well, all this was changed by what we did. Soon a numerous membership succeeded to the few who on Scottish railways had previously joined the Institution, and we had much satisfaction in finding that we were able to dispense substantial aid to many old and needy railway-men and to their widows and orphans. Mr. Wainwright remained Chairman of the Branch till his death, and I continued Secretary until I left Scotland.

In 1883, after my return from Paris, I grew restless again, with a longing for more responsibility and a larger and freer life; with, perhaps, an admixture of something not so ennobling—the desire for a bigger income. Never was I indifferent to the comforts that money can bring, though never,

I must confess, was I gifted with the capacity for money making or money saving. The pleasures of life (the rational pleasures I hope) had always an attraction for me. I could never forego them, or forego the expense they involved, for the sake of future distant advantages. What weighed with me, too, was the fact that I was undoubtedly overworked and my health was suffering. It was not that my railway duties proper were oppressive, but the duties as Secretary of the Railway Benevolent Institution in Scotland added considerably to my office hours, and at home I often worked far into the night writing for the several papers to which I contributed. Too much work and too little play was making Jack a very dull boy. I envied those officers, such as John Mathieson, whose duties took them often out of doors, and gave them the control and management of men.

My chief was as kind and considerate as ever, and I confided to him the thoughts that disturbed me. Warm-heartedly he sympathised with my feelings. He himself had gone, he said, through the same experience some twenty years before. The prospect of promotion at St. Enoch, he agreed, seemed remote; the principal officers, except the engineer, were young or middle-aged, and he himself was in the prime of life. He did not want to lose me, but I must look out, and he would look out too. At last the opportunity came, and it came from Ireland. The Belfast and County Down Railway Chairman, Mr. R. W. Kelly, and a director, Lord (then Mr.) Pirrie, were deputed to see half a dozen or so likely young applicants in England and Scotland. I was interviewed by these gentlemen in Glasgow, was selected for the vacant post of general manager, and in May, 1885, removed with my family to Belfast, and entered upon my duties there.

Lord Pirrie is a great shipbuilder of world-wide fame. I was not long at the County Down before I discovered his wonderful energy, his marvellous capacity for work, his thoroughness, and keen business ability. I always thought that at our interview at Saint Enoch he was as much impressed with the order and method which appeared in the office of which I had charge as by anything else. I showed him everything very freely, and remember his appreciation and also his criticism, of which latter, as I afterwards found, he was at times by no means sparing, but if sometimes severe, it was always just and salutary. How little one foresees events. Not long had I left

Glasgow before unexpected changes occurred. In 1886, Mr. Wainwright took ill and died; soon after Mathieson went to Queensland; and in less than eight short years three general managers had succeeded Mr. Wainwright.

They were good to me when I left Glasgow. I was presented with a valuable testimonial at a banquet at which Mr. Wainwright presided and at which my good friend, G. G., made a fine speech. It would be idle for me to say that the warm congratulations of my friends, the prospects of change, and the sense of new responsibilities, did not delight and excite me. But a strong measure of regret was mixed with the pleasurable draught. I was greatly attached to my chief, and keenly felt the parting from him. He felt it too. When it came to the last handshake words failed us both.

The Nestor of the Glasgow and South-Western Railway was Andrew Galloway, the chief engineer. A Nestor he looked with his fine, strong, grave features, abundant hair, and flowing beard. He was a very able engineer, but had many old-fashioned ways, one of which was an objection to anyone but himself opening his letters, and when absent from his office they would at times lie for several days untouched. If remonstrated with he was quite unmoved. He had a theory that most letters, if left long enough unanswered, answered themselves. In me he always showed a fatherly interest, and sometimes chided me for talking too freely and writing too much. His last words when he bade me farewell, and gave me his blessing were, to remember always to think twice before I spoke once. On the very day I was assured of my appointment as general manager for the County Down Railway I discarded the tall silk hat and the black morning coat, which for some time had been my usual business garb, as it was of many serious-minded aspiring young business men in Glasgow. Mr. Galloway asked me the reason of the change, which he was quick to observe. "Well," said I, "I have secured my position, so it's all right now." Never since, except in London, have I renounced the liberty I then assumed; the bowler and the jacket suit became my regular business wear, and the other habiliments of severe respectability were relegated to churchgoing, weddings, christenings, and funerals and other formal occasions.

CHAPTER XV

Further Railway Legislation

In Chapter IX., at the outset of my Glasgow and South-Western service, I reviewed the public Acts of Parliament passed since the beginning of railways down to the year 1875, and it may not be amiss to notice now the further railway legislation enacted up to 1885.

The first measure of importance was the *Railway Returns (Continuous Brakes) Act*, 1878. The travelling public had for some years been sensitive regarding railway accidents which, though infrequent, nevertheless occurred much oftener then than now, and were more serious in their results. The matter of their reduction began to receive the serious attention of railway engineers and inventors, and among many appliances suggested was the system of continuous brakes. In June, 1875, a great contest of brakes, extending over three days, in which trains of the principal companies engaged, took place on the Midland railway between Newark and Bleasby. A large number of brakes competed—the Westinghouse, the Vacuum, Clarke's Hydraulic, Webb's Chain, and several others. It is recorded that at the conclusion of the trial, each patentee left the *refreshment tent* satisfied that his own brake was the best; but Time is the great arbiter, and *his* decision has been in favour of two—the Automatic Vacuum and the Westinghouse, and these are the brakes the companies have adopted. The Act required all railway companies to submit to the Board of Trade, twice in every year, returns showing the amount of rolling stock fitted with con-

tinuous brakes, the description of brake and whether self-acting and instantaneous in action. So far there was no compulsion upon the railways to use continuous brakes, though most of the companies were earnestly studying the subject, but the rival claims of inventors and the uncertainty as to which invention would best stand the test of time tended to retard their adoption. Meanwhile, the publicity afforded by the Board of Trade Returns, and public discussion, helped to hasten events and the climax was reached in 1889, when a terrible accident, due primarily to inefficient brake power, occurred in Ireland, and was attended with great loss of life. The Board of Trade was in that year invested with statutory power to *compel* railway- companies, within a given time, to provide all passenger trains with automatic continuous brakes.

In 1878 there was also passed the *Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act.* Foot and mouth disease had for some time been rife in Great Britain and Ireland, and legislation became necessary. The Act applied not only to railways but was also directed to the general control and supervision of flocks and herds. It contained a number of clauses concerning transit by rail, and invested the Privy Council with authority to make regulations, the carrying out of which, as affecting the Glasgow and South-Western Railway, devolved upon me, and for a year or two occupied much of my time.

An Act to extend and regulate the liability of employers, and to provide for compensation for personal injuries suffered by workmen in their service, came into force in 1880. It was called the *Employers' Liability Act*, and was the first step in that class of legislation, which has since been greatly extended, and with which both employer and employed, are now familiar.

That great convenience the *Parcel Post*, which for the first time secured to the public the advantage of having parcels sent to any part of the United Kingdom at a fixed charge, and which seems now as necessary to modern life as the telephone or the telegraph, and as, perhaps, a few years hence, the airship will be, was brought into existence by the *Post Office (Parcels) Act*, 1882. Under that Act it was ordained that the railways of the United Kingdom should carry by all trains whatever parcels should be handed to them for transit by the Post Office, the railway remuneration to be fifty-five per cent. of the money paid by the public. The scheme was a great

success. During the first year of its operation the parcels carried numbered over 20 millions, and in the year 1913-14 (the last published figures) reached 137 millions.

The *Cheap Trains Act*, 1883, was passed to amend and consolidate the law relating to (*a*) railway passenger duty, and (*b*) the conveyance of the Queen's Forces by railway. It did not apply to Ireland. Passenger duty was never exacted in that happy land. In Great Britain the Act relieved the railway companies from payment of the duty on all fares not exceeding one penny per mile; provided for the running of workmen's trains; and prescribed a scale of reduced fares for the conveyance of Her Majesty's soldiers and sailors.

After this Act, and until the year 1888, no further general railway legislation of importance took place.

CHAPTER XVI

Belfast and the County Down Railway

After eighteen years of railway life, at the age of 34, I had attained the coveted position of a general manager. Of a small railway it is true, but the Belfast and County Down Railway, though unimposing as to mileage, was a busy and by no means an uninteresting line. A railway general manager in Ireland was in those days, strange to say, something of a *rara avis.* There were then in the Green Isle no less than eighteen separate and distinct working railways, varying from four to nearly 500 miles in length, and amongst them all only four had a *general manager.* The system that prevailed was curious. With the exception of these four general managers (who were not on the larger lines) the principal officer of an Irish railway was styled *Manager* or *Traffic Manager.* He was regarded as the senior official, but over the Traffic Department only had he *absolute* control, though other important duties which affected more than his own department often devolved upon him. He was, in a sense, maid of all work, and if a man of ability and character managed, in spite of his somewhat anomalous position, to acquire many of the attributes and much of the influence of a real general manager. But the system was unsatisfactory, led to jealousies, weakened discipline, and was not conducive to efficient working. Happily it no longer exists, and for some years past each Irish Railway has had its responsible *General Manager.* Something that happened, in the year 1889, gave the old system the first blow. In that year a terrible accident to a Sunday school

excursion of children occurred on the Great Northern Railway near Armagh, and was attended with great loss of life. This led the company to appoint a General Manager, which they did in June, 1890, Thomas Robertson, of the Highland Railway of Scotland, of whom I spoke earlier in these pages, being the capable man they selected.

Curious certainly was the method which up to then prevailed on the Great Northern system. Three different *Managers* exercised jurisdiction over separate sections of the line, and the *Secretary* of the Company, an able man, stationed in Dublin, performed much more than secretarial duties, and encroached, so I often heard the managers complain, upon their functions. This divided authority was a survival of the time before 1877, when the Great Northern system belonged to several independent companies; and, in the words of the Allport Commission of 1887, " its continued existence after ten years could hardly be defended."

Very pleasant and very interesting I found my new avocation on the County Down, which for short the Belfast and County Down Railway was usually called. My salary certainly was not magnificent, £500 a year, but it was about £100 more than the whole of the income I earned in Scotland, and now for the £500 I had only my railway work to perform. Now I could give up those newspaper lucubrations, which had become almost a burden and daily enjoy some hours of leisure. The change soon benefited my health. Instead of close confinement to the office during the day, and drudgery indoors with pen and ink at night, my days were varied with outdoor as well as in-door work, and I had time for reading, recreation and social enjoyment. My lean and lanky form filled out, and I became familiar with the greeting of my friends: " Why, how well you look!"

The County Down railway was 68 miles long. Situated entirely in County Down, it occupied a snug little corner to itself, bounded on the north by Belfast Lough, on the south by the Mourne Mountains, and on the east by Strangford Lough and the Irish Sea. To the west ran the Great Northern railway but some distance away. The County Down line enjoyed three fine sources of seaside traffic, Bangor, Donaghadee and Newcastle, and was rich in pleasure resorts and in residential districts. It even possessed the attractions of a golf course, the first in Ireland, the *Kinnegar at Holy-*

wood, but more of that anon. As I have said, it was a busy line, and it was not unprosperous. The dividend in 1885 reached five and a-half per cent., and in spite of considerable expenditure necessary for bringing the line up to first-class condition, it never went back, but steadily improved, and for many years has been a comfortable six and a-half per cent. In 1885 the condition of the permanent way, the rolling stock, and the stations was anything but good, and as the traffic showed capacity for development, to stint expenditure would have been but folly. I do not think, however, the outlay would have been so liberal as it was but for Lord (then Mr.) Pirrie, who was an active and influential director, though there were also on the Board several other business men of energy and position. Indeed, it was a good Board, but the Chairman, though a shrewd far-seeing man, had, like John Gilpin's spouse, " a frugal mind," and Lord Pirrie's bold commercial spirit quite eclipsed his cautious ways. One instance will suffice to exemplify this, and also to illustrate the novelty of my new duties, which were delightful in their diversity and activity to one whose life hitherto had been confined to sedentary work.

It was the rolling stock that demanded the most urgent attention—engines, carriages and wagons and especially carriages. Of carriages there were not enough for the traffic of the line, and many were in a very sorry condition, particularly those which had been taken over with the Holywood and Bangor Railway, acquired by the company the previous year. One week-end, soon after I joined the service, I had all passenger carriages brought into Belfast, except those employed in running Sunday trains, and early on the Sunday morning (it was in the summer) with the company's locomotive and mechanical engineer I examined each carriage thoroughly from top to bottom, inside and out, above and below, and with his practical help and expert knowledge, noted carefully down the defects of each. He worked with a will, delighted that someone as enthusiastic and even younger than himself was now in charge. He little suspected, I am sure, how ignorant I was of practical matters, as I kept my own counsel which was my habit when prudence so dictated. I knew the names of things and was well versed in the theory and statistics of repairs and renewals, but that was all. A fine worker was and is R. G. Miller. Well over 70 now, healthy and

energetic still, he occupies the position he did then. Age has not withered nor custom staled his juvenility. I met him on Kingstown promenade the other day walking with an elastic step and with the brightness of youth in his eye. The ordinary age-retirement limit, though a good rule generally, was not for him. Daylight failed and night came on before our task was finished, several carriages remaining unexamined. These and the Sunday running vehicles we subjected to scrutiny during the following week. At the next meeting of the Board I presented a report of what I had done, and urged that a number of new carriages should be contracted for without delay, enlarging upon the return we might confidently expect from a responsive traffic. The Chairman and most of the Board were a little aghast at what appeared, to a small company that had only recently emerged from straitened circumstances, a very large order. But Lord Pirrie came to the rescue, strongly supported my proposal and commended the thoroughness with which I had tackled the subject. The day was won, the carriages secure, and the order for their construction was placed with a firm in Birmingham. This expenditure was the precursor of further large outlays, for it was soon seen that the prospects of the company warranted a bold course.

I may, I am sure, be pardoned if I quote here some words from the report of Sir James Allport's Commission on Irish Public Works. It is dated 4th January, 1888. I had then been less than three years with the County Down, and so could claim but a modicum of the praise it contains, and my modesty, therefore, need not be alarmed. The words are: "*The history of the Belfast and County Down Company is sufficient to show how greatly both shareholders and the public may benefit from the infusion into the management of business qualities. In that case a board of business men have in ten years raised the dividend on the ordinary stock from nil to 5½ per cent., while giving the public an improved service and reduced rates.*" My satisfaction was the greater as I had given evidence before the Commission, and helped to tell them the cheerful story of the progress and development of the County Down Company. It was my first appearance as a railway witness and before Sir James Allport, who had commanded my unbounded admiration from my first entrance at Derby into railway life. Need I say that to me it was an event of importance.

In the year 1875 the Board of the County Down, after an investigation of its affairs by a Committee of Shareholders, was reorganised, and it was then that Mr. Richard Woods Kelly became Chairman, and Lord (then Mr.) Pirrie a Director. The latter has more than once since told me that the County Down shares were one of his best investments.

Mr. Kelly merits more than a passing word. Before I joined the County Down I was told he was a " terror," and that I ran foolish risk in leaving a service like the Glasgow and South-Western for a position in which I might find it impossible to please. But fears like that never disturbed me. To wrongdoers Mr. Kelly could certainly be " a terror," and wrongdoers there were, I believe, in the service in the early days of his chairmanship. He was a mild-mannered man, tall, rather pale, with refined features and a low-toned pleasant voice. But beneath this smooth and gentle exterior resided great firmness. He would smile and smile with wonderful imperturbability and, in the quietest tones and the blandest way, say severe and cutting things. Economy was his strong point and he observed it in his public and private life with meritorious consistency. Impervious to cold, as to most other human weaknesses, in winter or summer he never wore an overcoat. His smooth face and tall slight figure seemed as indifferent to the angry elements as bronze or stone. By man or Nature I never saw him ruffled or in the least degree disturbed. But he had his human side, as all men have, and in time I discovered it and grew to like him. He was not at heart so cold as he seemed. Though he could not write a page without mis-spelling some of the words, his letters were always concise and very much to the point. But it was only in spelling he was deficient. He spoke well, was a shrewd judge of men, had a keen sense of humour, a clear perception of facts, and was quick to detect and discard everything irrelevant.

Lord Pirrie and Mr. Kelly, in connection with the County Down, were hand and glove, and it was no small part they played in its transformation from dark and dismal poverty to smiling prosperity.

My assistant was James Pinion, afterwards my successor, and later on Manager of the Cheshire Lines Committee at Liverpool. Being a capable fellow and a hard worker, it was only natural that he felt disappointed at not being made general manager of the County Down instead of imported

me; but any sign of soreness soon disappeared. The kindness, the consideration and the confidence I had received at Mr. Wainwright's hands, as his assistant, were not forgotten and I felt pleasure in endeavouring to treat *my* assistant in the same way. It was not long before its effect appeared. He told me one day that it was a new experience for him to be so frankly trusted and so freely consulted, but it made him happier and imparted a greater zest to his work. Certainly he served me with enthusiastic zeal and fine loyalty. Throughout a long period of railway management I have been most fortunate in securing the goodwill and ready help of the staff, and in many instances their strong personal attachment. There are men no doubt whose natures are proof against kindness and consideration, but my experience is that they are few and far between. I have found also that if one refrains from fault-finding, gives praise where praise is due, and overlooks small or venial faults, when reproof becomes necessary, if it be temperately administered, it is always effective and productive of good. But even such reproof may be carried too far as on one occasion I found to my dismay. Pinion, one forenoon, came into my room to tell me he had discovered that the man in charge of the cloak room was guilty of peculation; had been tampering with the tickets, and appropriating small sums. I sent for him, talked to him very severely, sent him home, and told him he should hear what would be done. An hour later, I heard he was *dead*: that on his way to his home he had purchased a bottle of laudanum and swallowed the contents!

In Scotland a railway manager was rarely worried by outside interference in the management of his men. Well intentioned people either credited him with the possession of good sense and decent feeling, or, themselves resentful of any inter-meddling in their own affairs, refrained from meddling in his. But it was different I found in Ireland, even in Belfast where Scottish traditions and Scottish ways were not unknown. Exceeding good nature, I suppose, is largely accountable for the readiness with which people in the sister isle espouse, often with little consideration, the cause of any railway employee who has or fancies he has a grievance. A rather ridiculous instance of this occurred soon after my installation at the County Down. One of my first duties was to examine the line and the employees

at each station. At one small station I found in charge a station master in poor health and well advanced in years—in fact quite beyond his work. I learned that he possessed a small property in land and was quite willing to retire if given a few weeks in which to make his arrangements. This, of course, I gladly granted as well as a little parting gratuity. He was well pleased, and wrote me to that effect. But, to my astonishment, not many days passed before a long and numerously signed Memorial to the Board arrived beseeching the Directors to stay the hand of their General Manager in his harsh and unfeeling treatment of a faithful old servant. He was indeed a faithful old servant; but he was quite ignorant of any memorial on his behalf having been sent to the Directors. Apparently the memorialists did not consider it necessary to consult him.

To be now my own master, subject only to the control of a reasonable and businesslike Board of Directors, a Chairman who resided in Dublin, visiting Belfast once a fortnight only, to have the command of men and the working of a railway, and to be free to move about the line as I thought fit, was a pleasure indeed and made Ireland a pleasant place. I lived near the city, but on its outskirts, with open country and sea views around me, occupied a neat little detached house, with a bit of garden wherein I could dig and cultivate a few roses, where the air was pure and clear—a refreshing change from the confinement of a flat, four stairs up, in the crowded environs of smoky Glasgow.

CHAPTER XVII

Belfast and the County Down—(*continued*)

During the first few years of my service on the County Down little occurred to disturb the even tenor of my way. In a sense the duties of my new position were simple. There were no such things as joint lines, joint station working, running powers or joint committees, as in England and Scotland, to distract attention or consume time which could more usefully be devoted to the affairs of one's own railway. Gradually I grew familiar with out-door matters, and duties that seemed strange at first grew as easy as second nature. I learned a good deal about signalling, became an adept in single line working, an expert in engine running economies, and attained some success in the management of men.

One thing especially gave me pleasure—my monthly visit to the Managers' Conference at the Irish Railway Clearing House in Dublin. There I met my brother managers in the Irish railway world, and learned something of the other lines. The leading men at the Conference were Ilbery, Great Southern and Western; Cotton, Belfast and Northern Counties; Plews and Shaw, Great Northern; Ward, Midland Great Western; and Skipworth, Manager in Ireland of the London and North-Western. Of all the managers who assembled there I was the youngest, and the greatest personality was Edward John Cotton. By common consent, he had acted as Chairman of the Conference from the year 1864. No one had ever dreamed of assuming the position when he was present. This continued till 1890,

when Tom Robertson came on the scene. *He* was all for change and innovation, and managed to get the principle of formal election to the chairmanship established. Many of us thought it was a pity to make the change in Cotton's time, but Edward John seemed the least concerned of us all, for nothing ever disturbed his good humour. Robertson was a veritable Hotspur and upset for a time the serenity of our meetings. He was overcharged with energy, and a bachelor.

It is my belief that had our genial Cotton chosen the stage for a profession he would have found a place among the distinguished actors of his time, if not in tragedy, certainly in comedy. His face, voice, manner and style all proclaimed it. You had only to hear him read in public, which he loved to do, see how natural his dramatic action was, and feel the effect of a mere wave of his hand through his abundant hair, to be convinced of this. In railway circles throughout England, Scotland and Ireland he was widely known. He attended all railway conferences for he loved movement and travel. Shrewd and well-informed, his knowledge was acquired not from books or study but from close observation of passing events and free and friendly intercourse with all whom he met. His railway was very popular and he and it were held in high esteem. Easily accessible to all, courteous and reasonable ever, he was in many respects a model railway manager. His success lay not so much in the work he performed himself as in obtaining the best results from those around him, and the capacity to accomplish this is certainly one of the most useful qualities a railway manager, or any man in a position of authority, can possess. It is not too much to say that his staff loved him; certainly they all admired him. He was the readiest man I ever met to generously acknowledge the worth of those who served him, and whenever possible he took occasion to do so in public.

I have spoken previously of the *beaux* I knew in the higher ranks of the railway service but, strange to say, omitted to mention Edward John who, in some respects outshone all others. His coat may not have been cut by a west-end tailor, his hat may not have been a Lincoln Bennett, or his necktie the latest production of Burlington Arcade, but who could wear a tall white hat with a black band, with the least little rakish tilt, and a light grey frock coat with a rose in the buttonhole, with such an air and grace as he?

To face page 98

EDWARD JOHN COTTON

He appreciated keenly all the good things that life can give and loved his fellow men. *Pax vobiscum*, kind, warm-hearted Edward John! You were an ornament to the railway world and always my friend.

It was Cotton and his Chairman, the Right Hon. John Young, who put in my way my first arbitration case, to which I have in a previous chapter alluded. This, as far as I remember, occurred in 1886. A dispute had arisen between the Northern Counties Company and a small railway company whose line they worked, concerning, I think, the payment for and use of some sidings. I conducted the proceedings of course with the greatest of care, attended, perhaps, with a little trepidation, summoned every possible witness to appear before me, and visited in state the *locus*. Edward John was, I think, a little amused. Much older than I he had long since passed through these youthful phases. I issued my award, with the usual result that while each party was fairly well pleased neither was altogether satisfied. I was proud of my *début* as an arbitrator, especially as it was rewarded by, what seemed to me then, a very handsome fee.

In January, 1886, an incident that is worth narrating occurred. In my office a new junior clerk was required. An advertisement in the newspapers produced a large number of applications, and about a dozen of the applicants were selected to be seen, one after the other, by Pinion and myself. Before lunch one day we interviewed half a dozen or so. Returning together from lunching in the city, as we neared the station, Pinion drew my attention to a youth who was evidently making for the railway premises. Said I to Pinion: "If that youth is one of the candidates, I'll be surprised if he's not the boy for us." It was only a back view we had of him, but he held himself so well, walked so briskly, looked so neat, smart, and businesslike that he arrested attention. That boy, Charles A. Moore, then fresh from school and just fifteen, is now general manager of the railway!

It was in 1886, too, that I first met Walter Bailey, between whom and myself a friendship sprung up which grew in depth and sincerity as time went on, lasted for thirty years, and was only terminated by his lamented death in January, 1917. The friendship thus formed yielded much pleasure and happiness to me and, I think I may safely say, also to my departed friend. Bailey, who was about my own age, came to Ireland from the

South-Eastern Railway, soon after my settlement in Belfast, to fill the position of Accountant to the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway. Two young Englishmen, landed in Ireland, engaged in the same sort of business, in the same city, would naturally gravitate towards each other but, more than this, what made us such intimate friends were, tastes in common, similarity of views, especially concerning railway affairs, a mutual liking for literary matters, and—well, other less definable things that form the foundation of all true friendships. Throughout our long intimacy we often took counsel together on subjects of mutual interest, but it was I who sought his advice and help much oftener than he sought mine, for he was cleverer than I. Indeed in the whole railway world I never met an intellect so quick, or so clear and luminous as his.

Bailey was the most unselfish man I ever knew; the readiest to help others. His pen, his remarkable stores of knowledge, and his spare time too, were always at the service, not only of his friends, but often of those who were scarcely more than mere acquaintances. The amount of work which he cheerfully imposed upon himself in this way was astounding and never was it done grudgingly or half-heartedly, but always promptly and generously. It afforded him a pleasure that only one endowed as he could feel. This part of him was often the subject of talk with those of us who knew him well. But what charmed *me* most, more even than his brilliant mental gifts, were the sweetness of his disposition and his quaintly quizzical and happy humour. Ambition was not strong in him, was in fact all but absent, and he often rallied me on mine. He never in all his life asked for any improvement in salary or position; but, in spite of his inveterate modesty, rose high, became Chief Accountant of the Midland Railway of England and, I should say, the leading railway accountant in the United Kingdom. On railway matters he was a writer of great skill, and all he wrote was enlivened with the happiest humour. To the *Railway News* he was a valued contributor, and in railway polemics a master.

The Director on the County Down with whom I became most intimate was the Right Honourable (then Mr.) Thomas Andrews. He was brother to Judge Andrews; brother-in-law of Lord Pirrie; became Chairman of the Company; was made a Privy Councillor; a Deputy Lieutenant of Down; High

To face page 100.

WALTER BAILEY

Sheriff of that County and President of this and that, for he was a man of ability and character, but simple in mind and manners as the best men mostly are. Eloquent in speech, warm-hearted and impulsive, he found it difficult to resist a joke, even at the expense of his friend. In April, 1890, he wrote me: "I hope you were not at all annoyed at my pleasantries to Mr. Pinion. I am not exactly one of those men who would rather lose a friend than a joke, but I find it hard to resist a joke when a good opportunity presents itself. I am bound to say that I would be sorry to annoy *you* by a jest or in any other way." His temper was lively but though quickly roused soon subsided, and he never harboured resentment. At the conclusion of the very first Board meeting I attended as general manager at the County Down, he followed me into my room, complimented me on the way I had discussed the business of the day, and added: "I'm sure you'll be successful in Ireland for you have the *suaviter in modo* combined with the *fortiter in re*." It was a pretty compliment, and sincere I knew, for no one could meet him without recognising his frank outspoken nature. On the threshold of my new work such encouragement greatly cheered me and increased my determination to do my best. Until his death, not long ago, we often corresponded on railway and other matters, and he was always my staunch friend. He had a taste, too, for poetry which we sometimes discussed. The *Thomas Andrews*, who went down with the *Titanic* in the North Atlantic, on the 14th April, 1912, was his son, the story of whose short but strenuous life, and its tragic end, is told in a little book written by Shan F. Bullock. Sir Horace Plunkett wrote an introduction to it, in which he says: "He was one of the noblest Irishmen Ulster has produced in modern times, to whom came the supreme test in circumstances demanding almost superhuman fortitude and self-control. There was not the wild excitement of battle to sustain him; death had to be faced calmly in order that others—to whom he must not even bid farewell—might live." A few minutes before the end, so it is recorded, on the boat deck of the *Titanic*, the grandest sight of him was seen, as he stood with wonderful calm, throwing overboard deck chairs to those who were struggling in the water below. He had no thought of himself, but only of duty and of others. Then came the end: the *Titanic*, with a low long slanting dive went down and with her Thomas Andrews. He was only 39, but had attained the high position of a Managing Director of

the great firm of Harland and Wolff. I knew him as a boy, manly, handsome, high-spirited, clever—" the father of the man." That this terrible tragedy shortened the life of *his* father is certain.

In 1887, and again in 1888, Bailey and I took our holidays together, visiting Normandy, Paris, Belgium, Holland and the Rhine, doing a great deal of walking, which he liked as much as I. He was the prince of travelling companions, always gay and sprightly, and spoke French with great fluency. His happy disposition, unfailing good humour, and keen enjoyment of everything, even of the occasional discomforts that arose, as in travelling discomforts will arise, especially when funds are not too plentiful, made every hour of our holiday enjoyable. He had the happy gift of seeing always the humorous and the best side of things. He acted as paymaster on our tours and presented with great regularity records of our joint expenditure with the neatness and accuracy of the perfect accountant. Never a pipe smoker, he had no special interest in pipes, but to me the happiness of our first holiday was increased by the colouring of a new meerschaum. In this delightful art I was a disciple of Samuel Swarbrick, though I needed not, as he did, the services of another in the early stages of the colouring process. Whoever has been the votary of a meerschaum will understand the pride with which I frequently displayed my pipe and its deepening colour to Bailey, often to his great amusement I must admit. In a hotel in the city of Antwerp, where we stayed for several days, we occupied adjoining bedrooms having a communicating door. One night, towards early morn, but before daylight had dawned, I was suddenly awakened out of a sound sleep, and to my astonishment saw Bailey with lighted candle standing by my bedside, with a serious look on his face. " Great Scott! what's the matter?" I exclaimed. " *My dear boy, I can't sleep; do let me see your pipe,*" he answered. With such like pleasantries he beguiled the happy times we spent together.

In these years I had another pleasure: I learned to ride, taking lessons in horsemanship at a riding school in Belfast. I soon acquired a firm seat, and my good friend H. H. (who was a practised horseman, and then lived in Belfast too) and I had many delightful rides in the beautiful country around the city. For many years, so far as opportunity and means allowed, I indulged myself in this best of all exercises.

CHAPTER XVIII

Railway Rates and Charges, the Block, the Brake, and Light Railways

Until the autumn of 1888 nothing occurred to disturb the even tenor of my way, and I pursued in peace my daily work at the County Down. It was interesting work and pleasant to become personally acquainted with the customers of the company, many of whom lived in towns and villages some distance from the railway, and to gain their good will. It was interesting and also satisfactory to gradually establish an improved and efficient train service and to watch the traffic expand. It was exhilarating to engage in lively competition with carriers by road who, for short distance traffic, keenly competed with the railway. It was good to introduce economies and improvements in working, and gratifying to do what one could to help and satisfy the staff—a thing, I need scarcely say, much easier to accomplish then than now.

And so the time passed until August, 1888, when the railway world was deeply moved by the introduction of the *Railway and Canal Traffic Act.*

This Act was the outcome of the Report of the Select Committee of 1881, before which Mr. James Grierson gave such weighty evidence. One of the most important measures Parliament ever passed, it imposed on railway companies an amount of labour and anxiety, prolonged and severe, such as I hope they may not have to face again.

The Act, as I have stated before, altered the constitution of the Railway

Commission, and also effected minor alterations in the law relating to railways and canals, but its main purpose was the revision of Maximum Rates and Charges. It ordered each company to prepare a revised classification of goods and a revised Schedule of Maximum Rates, and submit them to the Board of Trade, who, after considering objections lodged against them, were to agree (if they could) with the companies upon a classification and schedule for adoption; and if they failed, to determine a classification and schedule themselves. Public sittings at Westminster, Edinburgh and Dublin, occupying 85 days, took place, but no agreement was reached; and in their Report to Parliament the Board of Trade embodied a Revised Classification and a standard Schedule of Maximum Rates for general adoption. The Schedule included Terminals. In accordance with the Act, it then became necessary for this Revised Classification and Schedule to be confirmed by Parliament. Against them petitions were lodged by both railways and traders, and the whole matter was referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses. This Committee sat in 1891 from April till July; but it was not until January, 1893, that all was completed and the Revised Classification and the new rates brought into force. Little time was afforded to the companies for their part of the work. The whole system of rates was changed. New rates had to be calculated on the new scale; thousands of rate books had to be compiled, and millions of rates altered and revised. It was a colossal task; impossible of fulfilment in the time allowed. The application of the new Schedule forcibly reduced many rates, inflicting much loss upon the companies, and because the companies advanced other rates (within the limits of the new maximum powers of course) to meet this loss, or to meet it to some extent, a storm of abuse arose and swept across the land. A trader from Berwick-on-Tweed, more frank than most, wrote the following "characteristic" letter as it was called at the time:—

> "What we want is to have our fish carried at *half* present rates. We don't care a —— whether it pays the railways or not. Railways ought to be made to carry for the good of the country, or they should be taken over by the Government. That is what all Traders want and mean to try to get."

Perhaps they would not be happy if they got it! In his clear, and most interesting book *Railways and Their Rates*, my friend Edwin A. Pratt says this letter was quoted in the Report which the Board of Trade made to Parliament after their 85 days' Inquiry. The railway companies announced that the new rates were in no sense final, that the time allowed them was insufficient for proper revision, that they would give an assurance that no increase would be made that would interfere with trade or agriculture or diminish traffic and that, unless under exceptional circumstances, no increase would in any case exceed 5 per cent. But all was in vain, and Parliament passed an Act which provided that any increase whatever (though within the limits of the new statutory maximum) if complained of, should be heard and decided upon by the Railway Commissioners, and that the *onus* of proving the reasonableness of the increase should rest on the railway company. Sir Alexander (then Mr.) Butterworth, in his book on *The Law Relating to Maximum Rates and Charges on Railways*, published in 1897, says this remarkable result is presented: that Parliament, "after probably the most protracted inquiry ever held in connection with proposed legislation, decided that certain amounts were to be the charges which railway companies should for the future be entitled to make, and in 1894 apparently accepted the suggestion that many of the charges, sanctioned after so much deliberation, were unreasonable, and enacted that to entitle a company to demand them, it should not be sufficient that the charge was within any limit fixed by an Act of Parliament." Thus Parliament, yielding to popular clamour, stultified itself, and in feverish haste to placate an angry and noisy public tied the hands of the railway companies, doing, I believe, more harm than good. This legislation naturally made the companies very cautious in reducing a rate because of the difficulties to be encountered should circumstances require them to raise it again, and railway rates thus lost that element of elasticity and adaptability so essential to the development of trade. Many a keen and enterprising business man have I heard lament the restrictions that Parliament imposed and declare that such interference with the freedom of trade was short-sighted in the extreme and bad for the country.

Immediately after the passing of the Act of 1888 the railway companies vigorously attacked the work imposed upon them. A special meeting on

the subject was held at the Irish Railway Clearing House in Dublin for the purpose of preparing a revised Classification and Schedule of Rates. This was a rare opportunity for me and I eagerly availed myself of it. Before I left Glasgow it will be remembered I had been entrusted with an examination of the statutory charging powers of the Glasgow and South-Western company, and with the drawing up of a suggested scale of maximum rates. No similar work had yet been done in Ireland, and it was altogether new to the Irish companies. I produced copies of the statements which I had prepared in Glasgow, and they served as a basis for what had to be done, saved much time and trouble and gained for me no little *kudos*. But more than this resulted. As I have hinted before, and as will hereafter appear, this bit of Glasgow work led to my promotion to a greater charge than the busy little County Down, which though I loved it well, I had begun to feel I was now outgrowing. Many other meetings at the Clearing House followed in which I took part with increasing confidence, and in which Walter Bailey also prominently figured. He and I were hand and glove. Cotton, who soon discovered that Bailey was an authority on the subject, as indeed he was on most railway matters, was not slow to profit by his knowledge and ability. He brought him to all our meetings, and valuable was the help that Bailey gave.

In 1889 there came into operation the *Regulation of Railways Act*. It invested the Board of Trade with power to order any company to adopt block working, to interlock all points and signals, and to use on all trains carrying passengers automatic continuous brakes. Before issuing the order the Board consented to hear any representations which the railways desired to make. The smaller companies, upon which the expenditure involved would press very hardly, and the circumstances of whose traffic seemed scarcely to require the same elaborate precautions for safety in working as the bigger and more crowded systems, banded together and waited on the Board of Trade. Upon me devolved the duty of presenting the case for the smaller Irish companies, and upon Conacher, of the Cambrian, for the smaller English lines. How finely Conacher spoke I well remember. He had an excellent voice, possessed in a high degree the gift of concise and forcible expression, and his every word told. But our eloquence accom-

plished little—some small modification regarding mixed trains, and that was all. Many of the lines in Ireland serving districts where population is scanty, traffic meagre, and trains consequently infrequent, could well have been spared the costly outlay which the Act involved. Three or four trains each way per day represent the train service on many of these small railways, and some of the sections of the larger lines warrant little more. Take, for instance, the case of the Midland Great-Western. On 330 out of its 538 miles not more than six trains each way in the 24 hours are required, and they could probably be reduced without hurting anyone. These figures relate not to the exceptional war time in which I pen these lines, when stern necessity has sweepingly reduced the train service, but to pre-war days when normal conditions prevailed. Half a dozen trains each way per day! In England there are as many, or more, in the hour!

The Act of 1889 also dealt with the working hours of railway men whose duty involved the safety of trains or passengers, and required each company to make periodical returns of those employed for longer hours than were to be named from time to time by the Board of Trade; and it contained further a useful clause to the effect that the fares were in future to be printed on passenger tickets. I should not be surprised if this simple little clause has not brought more real satisfaction to the minds and hearts of the people of the British Isles than all the laboured legislation on railway rates and charges.

In the year 1889 a great fillip was given to the extension of railways in Ireland by the passing of the *Light Railways (Ireland) Act.* It was familiarly known as "Balfour's Act." Mr. Balfour was then Chief Secretary of Ireland, and it was due to him that it was passed. The Act was designed "to facilitate the construction of Light Railways in Ireland," and embodied various recommendations of the Allport Commission. It was the first introduction of the principle of State aid by free money grants. Such aid was conditional upon the light railway being constructed or worked by an existing railway company, except in cases where the Baronies guaranteed dividends upon a portion of the capital. The amount which the Treasury was authorised to grant was £600,000. In 1896 this was increased by a further sum of £500,000, and both were, in addition to a capital sum,

represented by £40,000 per annum which had been granted under previous legislation. Under this Act and Acts of 1890 and 1896, over 300 miles, comprising 15 separate lines, were constructed at a total cost, exclusive of what the railway companies contributed, of £1,849,967, of which the Government contribution was £1,553,967. Although the lines were promoted under Light Railway Acts, and the Government grants were based upon light railway estimates, Parliamentary power was obtained to construct, maintain, and work them as other than light railways. This was taken advantage of by some of the working companies who, in eight instances contributed themselves a considerable amount of capital, in order that the lines should be made sound and substantial, of the usual gauge, and such as could be worked by the ordinary rolling stock of the company. The Midland Great-Western, for instance, so expended no less than £352,000 of their capital on " Balfour Lines " in the west. It was a spirited thing to do.

Of the 309 miles of " light " railways, made under the 1889 and subsequent Acts, 194 were constructed on the ordinary gauge of the country, 5 feet 3 inches, and the remainder on a 3-foot gauge.

Several Light Railway or Tramway Acts were passed in Ireland between 1860 and 1883, under which 295 miles of light railways at a cost of £1,389,784 were constructed. With the exception of the small sum of £144,804, the interest on the whole of this capital was guaranteed by the Baronies, the Treasury repaying the Baronies one-half but not to exceed two per cent.

The lines constructed under " Balfour's Act " are situated mostly in Connemara, Kerry, Mayo and Donegal, serving districts remote and thinly populated, where as commercial ventures they could not have been projected. That they have proved to be of great benefit to the country is beyond question. They have developed fishing and agriculture, and have brought the tourist into districts little visited before. Live stock and farm produce are able to reach their market, and places before isolated are in touch with the outer world.

One of the first of the railways made under the 1889 Act was a short line of 8 miles from the County Down line at Downpatrick to the little fishing village of Ardglass. It stood first on the list of lines recommended

for construction in the Report of the Allport Commission. Primarily it was intended for the development of the herring traffic which for years had abounded on the coast, but no sooner was the line opened, than that perverse migratory fish sought other seas, and did not return to Ardglass for I don't know how long.

The promotion of the Ardglass railway, and the steps necessary for obtaining an Order in Council for its construction and working, familiarised me with the Light Railway Legislation of Ireland, with which in subsequent years I was often concerned.

In the autumn of 1889, in company with Mr. Jackson (afterwards Lord Allerton), then Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Andrews and other directors of the County Down, I visited Ardglass. Under the new Act the Treasury, in connection with the projected railway construction, held the purse strings, and the Treasury, so far as we were concerned, was Mr. Jackson. We of the County Down were keen on getting the line sanctioned, and were very anxious concerning Mr. Jackson's visit. He was a man who drove a hard bargain, so it was said. Certainly he was an able man, and I greatly admired him that day. Later in life, when he was Lord Allerton, and Chairman of the Great Northern Railway of England, I met him again and liked him well.

In 1889 there were no *light railways* in Great Britain, or practically none. Except in Ireland they are of modern growth. What really constitutes a light railway it is not easy to say. Commonly it is thought to be a matter of gauge, but that is not so. Mr. Acworth says: " such a definition is in the nature of things impossible," but that, " a light railway must be something simpler and cheaper than an ordinary railway." Mr. Cole says that " the natural demand for a definition must be frankly met with the disappointing reply that a hard and fast definition, at once concise, exact, and comprehensive is not forthcoming, and that a partial definition would be completely misleading." As such authorities are unable to furnish a definition I shall not attempt it, and will content myself with suggesting that the most recognisable feature of a *light* railway is its *light* traffic.

CHAPTER XIX

Golf, the Diamond King, and a Steam-Boat Service

Thought not a golfer myself, never having taken to the game in earnest, or played on more than, perhaps, twenty occasions in my life, I may yet, I think, in a humble way, venture to claim inclusion amongst the pioneers of golf in Ireland, where until the year 1881 it was unknown. In the autumn of that year the Right Honourable Thomas Sinclair, Dr. Collier, of "British History" fame, and Mr. G. L. Baillie, a born golfer from Scotland, all three keen on the game, set themselves in Belfast to the task of establishing a golf club there. They succeeded well, and soon the Belfast Golf Club, to which is now added the prefix *Royal*, was opened. The ground selected for the links was the *Kinnegar* at Holywood, and on it the first match was played on St. Stephen's Day in 1881. That was the beginning of golf in Ireland. Mr. Baillie was the Secretary of the Club till the end of 1887, when a strong desire to extend the boundaries of the Royal game in the land of his adoption led him to resign the position and cast around for pastures new. Portrush attracted him, engaged his energies, and on the 12th May, 1888, a course, which has since grown famous, was opened there. About this time I made his acquaintance and suggested Newcastle, the beautiful terminus of the County Down railway, as another likely place. On a well remembered day in December, 1888, he accompanied me there, and together we explored the ground, and finished up with one of those excellent dinners for which the lessee of our refreshment rooms and his

capable wife (Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence) were famous, as many a golfer I am sure, recollects. Mr. Baillie's practised eye saw at once the splendid possibilities of Newcastle. Like myself, he was of an enthusiastic temperament, and we both rejoiced. I remembered the shekels that flowed to the coffers of the Glasgow and South-Western from the Prestwick and Troon Golf Courses on their line, and visions of enrichment for my little railway rose before me. Very soon I induced my directors to adopt the view that the railway company must encourage and help the project. This done the course was clear. They were not so sanguine as I, but they had not lived in Scotland nor seen how the Royal game flourished there and how it had brought prosperity to many a backward place. Mr. Baillie's energy, with the company's co-operation to back it, were bound to succeed, and on the 23rd March, 1889, with all the pomp and ceremony suitable to the occasion (including special trains, and a fine luncheon given by the Directors of the Company) the Golf links at Newcastle, Co. Down, were formally opened by the late Lord Annesley. From that time onward golf in Ireland advanced by leaps and bounds. Including Newcastle, there were then in the whole country, only six clubs and now they number one hundred and sixty-eight! The County Down Railway Company's splendid hotel on the links at Newcastle, with its 140 rooms, and built at a cost of £100,000, I look upon as the crowning glory of our golfing exploration on that winter day in 1888. To construct such a hotel, at such a cost, was a plucky venture for a railway possessing only 80 miles of line, but the County Down was always a plucky company, and the Right Honourable Thomas Andrews, its Chairman, to whom its inception and completion is chiefly due, was a bold, adventurous and successful man.

Another experience somewhat removed from ordinary railway affairs that helped to enliven the latter part of my time on the County Down, and added variety to the work imposed by the Railway and Canal Traffic Act and the revision of Rates and Charges, was a project in which I became engaged connected with the Isle of Man.

Joseph Mylchreest was a Manxman, a rough diamond but a man of sterling worth. He left home when young and worked first as a ship's carpenter. An adventurous spirit led him to seek his fortune in various

parts of the world—in the goldfields of California and Australia and in the silver mines of Peru and Chili. Later on he went to South Africa, where in the diamond mines he met with great success and made a large fortune. His property there he disposed of to Cecil Rhodes, and it now, I am told, forms part of the De Beers Consolidated Company's assets. In the late eighties he returned to his native island, settled at Peel, and became a magnate there.

One afternoon early in the year 1889 two gentlemen from the Isle of Man called upon me at my office. They were Mr. Mylchreest (the "*Diamond King*") and a lawyer friend whose name I forget, but I remember they informed me they were both members of the House of Keys. Mr. Mylchreest was anxious to do something to develop the little port of Peel, his native town, and a steamboat service between Peel and Belfast, Bangor or Donaghadee, seemed to him and his friends a promising project. What did the County Down think? Would either Bangor or Donaghadee be better than Belfast? If so, would my company join in and to what extent? We had no power to expend money in steamboat enterprise, but I assured them we would do all we could to help in other ways, and that Bangor was the port to select. My directors heartily approved and other interviews followed. Once, I had hurriedly to go over to Peel to meet Mr. Mylchreest and his lawyer, on a certain day, as some hitch had arisen, and by this time I was desperately keen on getting the steamboat service started. The only way of reaching Peel in time was by a collier steamer, belonging to the East Downshire Coal Co., which plied between Dundrum on the Co. Down coast, and Whitehaven; the manager of the company was my friend, and would allow the steamer to drop me at Peel. It was a memorable crossing, the weather was *bad* and so was I. But my journey was successful, and soon the Peel and North of Ireland Steamship Company, Limited, in which the "*Diamond King*" was much the largest shareholder, was established, and on the 26th June, 1889, the first voyage was made from Peel to Bangor. It was a great event for the quiet little town of Peel. Mr. Mylchreest had invited all his friends to the inaugural service, in addition a good number of the public travelled, and the steamer arrived at Bangor with nearly 300 passengers on board. On the return voyage from Bangor to Peel the same evening the "*Diamond King*"

gave a great dinner, champagne and speeches freely flowed, and music and dancing enlivened the proceedings. The service prospered for a time, but the traffic did not reach expectations. Ultimately it was taken over by the Isle of Man Steampacket Coy., and after a few years discontinued.

Little more remains to be told of my five and a-half years' sojourn in the north of Ireland. They were pleasant and profitable years for mind and body. With health improved, experience gained in *practical* railway work, knowledge acquired by personal contact with men of all sorts and conditions, I felt strong and confident, ready for anything, and, like Micawber, longed for somthing to turn up.

Early in October, 1890, Walter Bailey and I took our second Continental holiday together. We re-visited Paris, but spent most of our three weeks in a tour through Belgium, finishing up at Brussels. When we reached London I received a letter from my friend, W. R. Gill, Secretary of Bailey's railway, the Belfast and Northern Counties. It was to tell me that the position of Manager of the Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland had become vacant, and suggested that I should return home by way of Dublin and call upon the chairman of the company, Sir Ralph Cusack, in regard to the succession. Now something *had* turned up, and Bailey declared I was as good as appointed. At dinner that night we indulged in a bottle of sparkling wine—in nothing meaner would my warm-hearted friend drink success to the prospect that had so unexpectedly opened before me.

The Midland Great Western was the third largest railway in Ireland, nor, in the matter of length of line, was there very much between the three. The Great Southern and Western consisted of 522 miles, the Great Northern 487, and the Midland Great Western 432, nearly seven times as long as the County Down. No wonder I felt elated.

How it all came about was in this way. Skipworth, the London and North-Western Manager in Ireland, was on very friendly terms with Sir Ralph Cusack, and Sir Ralph had a high opinion of his judgment. He consulted Skipworth about a manager and asked if he knew any railway man in Ireland, not too old, who would do. Said Skipworth, " Tatlow of the County Down. He has shown up remarkably well at the Clearing House over this terrible Railway and Canal Traffic Act, and seems to know

all about it." And so I was appointed, and thus it was that the bit of work in Glasgow, of which I have spoken more than once, brought me this substantial promotion. My friend Gill not long before had left the service of the Midland Great Western, where he was Assistant Secretary, to become Secretary of the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway, and when Sir Ralph wrote to him about me he valiantly backed up Skipworth's fine recommendation. Skipworth was himself for several years manager of the Midland Great Western. He gave up the post when he joined the London and North-Western as their Irish Manager. It is good for a man to have friends, and I have been fortunate throughout my life in possessing many.

In December, 1890, I left the County Down to enter upon my duties as manager of the Midland Great Western. The County Down Directors, at their Board meeting on the 16th of that month, passed a minute recording their " high appreciation of the ability with which he " (my humble self) " has discharged his duties as general manager," adding that " his uniform courtesy, tact and judgment, added to his strict sense of honour, secured him the confidence of the Board." Need I say that I was proud of this testimonial, and as pleased as proud, because it went on to wish me success in my new duties, where I would " have a wider field for the exercise of my talents," and begged my " acceptance of a cheque as a mark of regard." This was better than the *walking stick* with which a certain railway officer, who was not too popular with his staff, was, it is said, presented by them, when he left for a bigger post on another line.

CHAPTER XX

The Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland

I had now completed one half of my active railway life; reached the age of 39; and, no longer a rolling stone, was settled in the service of a company with which I was destined to remain for the rest of my railway career. That my aspirations were satisfied I do not pretend, for ambition forbade any settled feeling of rest or content. Happily, my nature inclined to the sunny side and disappointments never spoiled my enjoyment of life or marred the pleasure I found in my daily work. My friend, Edward John Cotton, who, like myself, was an imported Englishman, had, like me, indulged in dreams of going back to England to fill some great railway post, but *he* had reached his sixties and his dreams were over. Often, when we talked familiarly together, he would say: "Joseph, if you aspire to be a general manager in England you ought never to have come to Ireland. They don't think much on the other side of Irish railways or Irish railway men." This, I daresay, was true, though he, well known, liked and admired as he was, ought to have been considered an exception, and why no British railway company, when posts were going, ever snapped him up is hard to say. Later on, even I, once or twice narrowly escaped obtaining a good thing on the English side of the Channel, but it never *quite* came off, and so I was left to make myself as happy as I could in Ireland.

Perhaps it was as well. Railway life in Ireland, though not highly remunerated, had its compensations as most situations in life have. There

the pressure of work was less constant and severe than in England. A railway manager was not confined to crowded cities, and enjoyed more breathing space. When he travelled on his line he came in contact with bucolic interests instead of the whirring wheels of trade. Time moved more slowly, greater leisure prevailed, the climate was softer, the country greener, manners easier, and more wit and humour abounded. Yes, on the whole, I was more fortunate than had my ambitious hopes been realised to the full. At least I think so now; and, as Hamlet says, " There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."

One immediate advantage I gained by entering the Midland Great Western service. Until then I had no chance of joining a superannuation fund. The Glasgow and South-Western had none, neither had the County Down; but the Midland Great Western was a party to the Clearing House Superannuation Corporation, and of it I became a member.

The Midland Great Western, as I have said, is the third largest railway in Ireland. It stretches from the Liffey to the Atlantic, serves the plains of Meath, the wilds of Connaught, and traverses large expanses of bog. Galway, Sligo, Westport, Athlone and Mullingar are the principal towns on its system.

When I became its manager, Sir Ralph Cusack had been chairman of the railway for nearly a quarter of a century and was in his sixty-ninth year. He attended daily in his office, devoting much time to the company's affairs. Although my position was not all I could have wished in the matter of that wide authority I coveted, and which, in my humble opinion, every railway manager should possess, it was in many respects very satisfactory, and every lot in life has its crumpled rose leaf. Sir Ralph regarded me as an *expert*, which, notwithstanding all his long experience as chairman, he did not himself pretend to be, and *railway experts* he held in high esteem. He supported me consistently, permitting no one but himself to interfere with anything I thought it right to do. I did not, to be sure, always get my own way, but I accomplished much, and, what I cared for most, was able to do good work for the company. Enthusiasm for one's work is a splendid thing, and so is loyalty to one's employers. I make no boast of possessing these, for they were common property; they permeated

the railway service and inspired the youngest clerk as well as his chief. Sometimes in these latter days I imagine such things are changed, though I would like to think it is only an old man's fancy, as it was in the case of the dear old Dubliner, who in his time had been a beaux and had reached his eightieth year. One sunny forenoon when airing himself in a fashionable street of the city, he was met by another old crony, who accosted him with:—

"Well, old friend, how are you this morning?"

"Oh, very well, thanks, quite well, only——" he responded.

"Only what?" asked his friend.

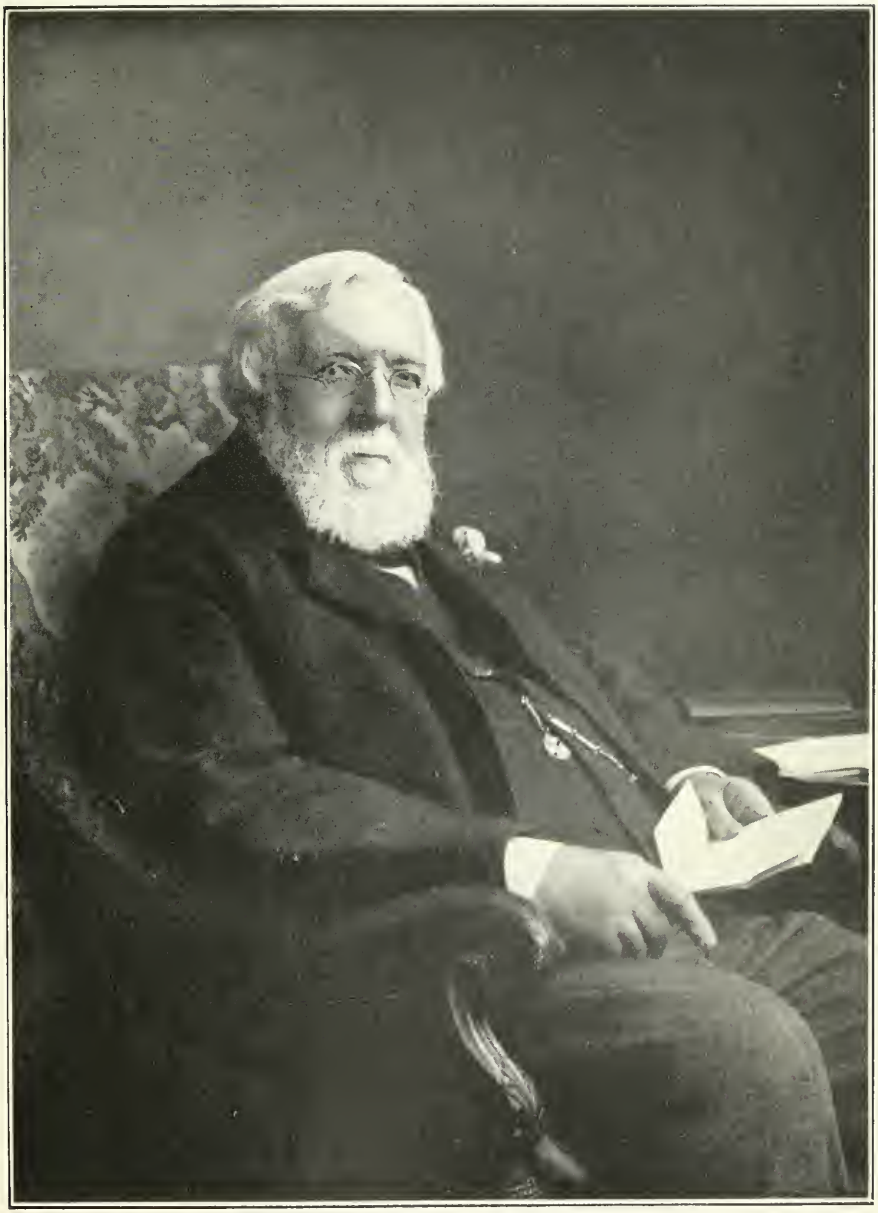
"Only the pavements are harder and the girls are not so pretty as they used to be," he replied with a whimsical look of regret in his face and a twinkle in his still bright eye.

Sir Ralph was a man of striking appearance, tall and imposing in figure. His head was massive and fine. His full beard was snowy white, as white as his abundant hair which was of a beautifully soft silky texture, with a sheen like satin. His voice was low and at times not very distinct. This was disappointing as his conversation was always interesting, not only for its intrinsic value, but also by reason of his charmingly varied and copious vocabulary, and his perfectly balanced phrases. Naturally and without the least effort the aptest words sprang to his lips in perfect order and sequence. His letters, too, were always exceedingly well expressed. He wrote a neat, sloping, rather flowing and somewhat old-fashioned hand, which greatly resembled the writing of Beau Brummell, and, like the illustrious Beau's, his numerals, which is rare nowadays, were very clearly and very beautifully formed. The Prince of Beaux was fastidious in his penmanship as in everything else. Sir Ralph's half-yearly speeches to the shareholders, though delivered extempore, were models of perspicuity. He used the scantiest notes, mere headings of subjects, and a few scraps of paper containing figures which he usually remembered without their aid. Of his memory he was proud. One day, at a meeting of the Board, after recalling particulars of some old transaction which no one else could in the least recollect, he turned to me and said: "Well, Tatlow, you see I sometimes remember something."

I rejoined: "Well, Sir Ralph, my only complaint is that you never forget anything." The little compliment pleased him. Never in his whole life, he said, had he written out a speech, and hoped he never would, but he lived to do so once. As he advanced in years his voice grew weaker, and on the last occasion on which he presided at a meeting of shareholders, he wrote his speech, or partly wrote it and, at his request, I read it to the meeting. Reported verbatim his addresses read as though they had been composed and written with the utmost care, so precise and correct was the language and so consecutive the matter. Though few could hope to do so well as he, I have always thought that in addressing shareholders, railway chairmen might trust less to formally prepared speeches and more to their powers of extemporaneous exposition. Some chairmen do this I know, but others still read from manuscript. However able the matter, the reading, in my judgment, is much less effective than the spontaneous expression of the speaker. The atmosphere created by the meeting, often a valuable adjunct, cannot be taken advantage of when the speech is read, nor can the chance of improvising a telling point, of enforcing an argument, or of seizing a passing mood of the audience or some fleeting incident of the moment.

Sir Ralph was made a Director of the Midland Great Western Company in 1864, and a year later was elected chairman, a position he occupied for the long period of 39 years. In 1864 the railway was in a very bad condition, wretchedly run down, and woefully mismanaged. Indeed, according to an official report at the time, worse than mismanagement existed. It was stated: "There were grave charges of official corruption which necessitated the retirement of one of the leading officers from the company's service." This was very exceptional in railway history, for British and Irish railways possess a record that has rarely been sullied. In my long career I only remember two other instances—one, the famous *Redpath* fraud (a name not inappropriate for one whose destiny it was to tread a road that led to his ruin) on the Great Northern in 1856, which Sir Henry (then Mr.) Oakley greatly assisted in discovering, and which, I believe, led to his first substantial advancement; the other on the Belfast and Northern Counties in 1886. This was in Edward John Cotton's time, but it would be superfluous to say that *he* was clear of blame for he was integrity itself. That the

To face page 118.



Lafayette, Ltd.] SIR RALPH CUSACK, D.L.

From a photograph taken at the age of 84, on his retirement from the Chairmanship of the Midland Great Western Railway.

occurrence could have happened during his management distressed him greatly I know.

When he was elected to the office of Chairman, Sir Ralph, it is said, accepted the position on the understanding that he should have autocratic power. In the task he undertook this was very likely desirable, and once acquired he was not the man to let such power slip from his grasp. His strong hands would firmly retain whatever they wished to hold.

In 1865 no less than 15 directors *adorned* the Midland Great Western Board, twice too many no doubt the chairman thought for a railway of 344 miles. In 1867 they were reduced to 8; in 1877 to 7; since when they have never numbered more. During the long period of Sir Ralph's occupancy of the chair no deputy chairman existed. The chairman reigned alone. That he was an *autocratic* chairman, his brother directors, were they now living, would I am sure attest. But though a strong, it was a beneficent sway that he exercised. He could be hard at times, but his nature was essentially kind and generous and his friendships numerous and lasting. He prided himself on his knowledge of the railway staff, down to the humblest member. He had strong likes and dislikes, and those who came under his displeasure had sometimes cause to fear him; but they were amongst the few, and the many remember him with nothing but the kindest feelings. To me he was always a warm and sincere friend, and between us existed, without interruption, the greatest frankness and confidence.

How wonderfully adaptable a creature is man. I had not been a fortnight in my new position when I felt myself quite at home, as though Dublin and the West of Ireland had been my natural habitat. Belfast and the County Down receded into the past; and shall I confess it? much as I had liked the north, much as I admired the industry, manliness and energy of its people, much as I had enjoyed my life there, and highly as I esteemed the friends I had made, something I found in my new surroundings—easier manners, more of gaiety, and an admixture of pleasure with work—that added to life a charm I had hitherto missed, not only in the North of Ireland but in Glasgow and Derby as well.

The Secretary of the Midland Great Western Railway, George William Greene, and Martin Atock, the locomotive engineer, were good fellows, and

warm friends of each other. I became and remained the sincere friend of both until death took them hence. My principal assistant, called *Assistant Manager*, was John P. Hornsby, now in his 85th year and living in New Zealand. Robert Morrison, whom I stole for his good sense, manly worth, and excellent railway ability, from the Belfast and Northern Counties in October, 1891, succeeded Hornsby as my assistant. Afterwards he became goods manager at the time Thomas Elliot was appointed superintendent of the line, two appointments which relieved me of much detailed work.

" The battle of Newcomen Junction " was raging at the time I joined the " Midland," as for shortness we dubbed the Midland Great Western and which, for the same reason, I shall continue to dub it, as convenience may require, during the continuance of my story. If I have occasion to again speak of my *alma mater*, the Midland of England, it shall, for the sake of clearness, be so designated. " The battle of Newcomen Junction." What of it? In railway circles, not only in Ireland but in England and Scotland too, it caused some talk at the time and no little amusement. Like many another conflict, 'twere better it had never been fought, for it left for long afterwards angry feelings where peace and amity should have existed, and it gained nothing that discussion and compromise could not have effected. The City of Dublin Junction Railway, a small line, a little over a mile in length (worked by the Dublin and South-Eastern Company) was formed to link up the Dublin railways and to provide through routes in connection with the Holyhead and Kingstown Royal Mail steamers and the steamers of the London and North-Western Company. A junction was authorised to be made at Newcomen with the Midland Great Western system. Parliament had sanctioned a junction, but not such a junction, the Midland said, as it was proposed to make. It would be unsafe and unworkable they contended, and they refused to allow it. The promoters insisted, the Midland were obdurate; the promoters invaded the Midland premises, knocked down a wall and entered on Midland land; the Midland gathered their forces, drove back the attacking party, and restored the wall; again the attack was made and repulsed and again the wall was demolished and re-built, and so the warfare continued, until at length an armistice was declared and the *casus belli* referred for settlement to the Railway Commissioners. Soon I

had to prepare the Midland case for the Commissioners' Court and give evidence before them. They decided against us and I am sure they were right, though of course I swore, as I was bound to do, that our opposition to the junction was natural and proper and our opponents were an unreasonable set of people. The Railway Commissioners sat in Dublin to hear the case; it was my first appearance before them, and I was sorry that appearance was not in a better cause.

My first few years in Dublin were as busy as could be. Much was astir in the Irish railway world and particularly on the Midland, which had their share (a larger share than the other companies) of the " Balfour " extension lines in hand. The proceedings under the *Railway and Canal Traffic Act* were also in full swing, involving frequent meetings at the Irish Clearing House, and many journeys to London. Hard upon all this came the work of preparing for a Parliamentary fight. This I thought a joyful thing, and I was eager for the fray. I had helped to prepare my old chief, Mr. Wainwright, for such contests but had never been in one myself, had never even been inside a committee room. In 1891 the Midland gave public notice of their intention to acquire by Act of Parliament the Athenry and Ennis Railway, and lodged a Bill for the purpose, which was vigorously opposed. It was with great zest that I made my preparations, arranged for witnesses, drafted briefs, consulted with lawyers and counsel, and compiled my evidence, not neglecting the important matter of visiting the district served by the railway we sought to acquire, making friends and working up local feeling in our favour. How the Bill proceeded, and what was its fate, will be set forth in another chapter.

Very soon after I settled in Dublin I was able to carry out a long cherished wish. Ever since I first arrived in Ireland I had hoped to be able to establish an Irish branch of the Railway Benevolent Institution, such as Mr. Wainwright and I had succeeded in forming in Scotland in the year 1880, but whilst I remained in Belfast my efforts were of no avail. When, however, I moved to Dublin and became manager of one of the principal railways, the difficulties disappeared, and *The History of the Railway Benevolent Institution, its Rise and Progress from* 1858 *to* 1897, *by Mr. W. F.* Mills, its late Secretary, contains the following:—

> " In February, 1891, Mr. Joseph Tatlow proposed to establish a Committee in Ireland, where supporters were few and far between, and in the report presented at the annual meeting in June, it was stated that ' The Board have great pleasure in announcing the appointment of a Committee in Dublin, presided over by Mr. Tatlow, the manager of the Midland Great-Western, and the founder of the successful Branch in Scotland.' "

Edward John Cotton warmly seconded my efforts, for his heart was in the work, and he was proud of telling us that he was one of the few surviving members of the first Board of Management of the parent Institution, which had its first meeting in London in May, 1858. He was then the newly-appointed manager of the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway, and was only twenty-eight years of age. The Irish Branch, like the Scotch, has been a great success. Its Committee of Management consists of the principal officers of the Irish railways, and they have brought home to the rank and file of the railway service a knowledge of the society and the solid benefits that membership confers. Year by year the membership has increased, and year by year the number of old and needy railway servants, and their widows, who have been pensioned from the funds, and the orphans who have been clothed, educated and maintained, have grown greater and greater. The Irish railway companies, the directors, the officers, and the public in Ireland, generously contribute to the funds of the institution. I filled the office of chairman of the Irish branch for 21 years, until in fact I retired from active railway work, since when the chairmanship has been an annual honour conferred upon the chairman for the year of the Irish Railway Managers' Conference. To quote again from Mr. Mills' book on the Institution:—

> " Mr. Joseph Tatlow, at the Dinner in aid of the Institution held in Dublin on October 23rd, 1902, said: ' It is now 30 years since I first became a collector for this Institution, and when I look back on the past, if there is one matter in my life which contains no grain of regret, it is my connection with the Institution, as in regard to it I can feel nothing but honest pride and gratification.' "

I am still a member of the Irish Committee, as well as of the London Board of Management, and those words, spoken sixteen years ago, express my feelings to-day.

Whilst writing the final words of this chapter the news reaches me of the death of Mr. Mills, at the fine old age of eighty-seven. He had a long and useful life, and the railway service owes him much. He it was whose zeal and enthusiasm firmly established the Railway Benevolent as a great institution. When, in 1861, he became its secretary, the income was only £1,500, and on his retirement in 1897, at the age of sixty-five, it had grown to £53,000. His mantle fell upon his son, Mr. A. E. Mills, who inherits his father's enthusiasm and carries on the good work with great success, as attested by the fact that for the year 1917 the income reached £106,000. The invested funds of the society to-day amount to upwards of a million, and in 1897 they were £476,000.

Mr. Mills senior I knew for forty years; and I often thought that, search the world over, it would be hard to find his equal for the work to which his life was devoted, and for which his talents were so specially adapted.

CHAPTER XXI

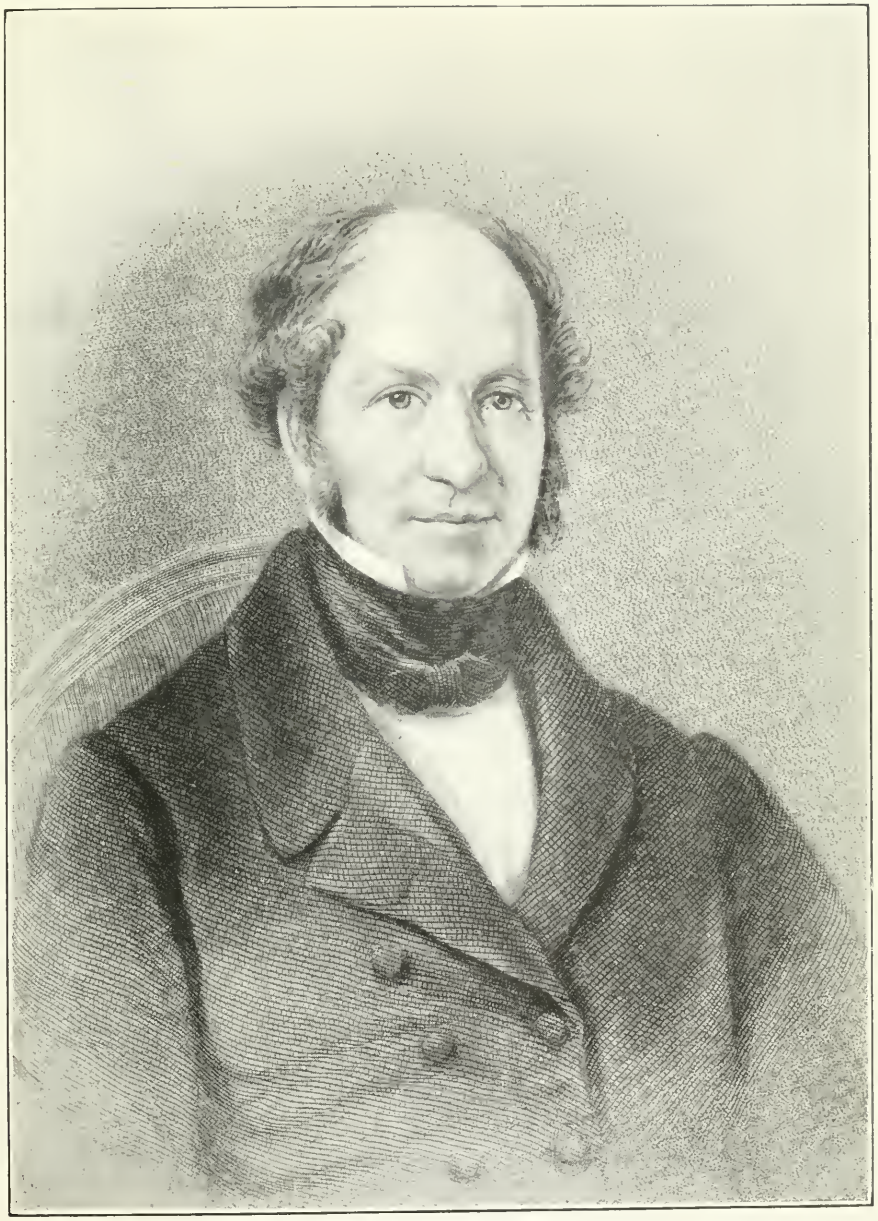
Ballinasloe Fair, Galway, and Sir George Findlay

A few days before the battle of Waterloo, during the journey to Brussels, partly by canal and partly by road, of Amelia and her party, Mrs. Major O'Dowd said to Jos Sedley: "Talk about kenal boats, my dear! Ye should see the kenal boats between Dublin and Ballinasloe. It's there the rapid travelling is; and the beautiful cattle." "The rapid travelling" was by what was called the *fly boat*, which was towed by three horses at a jog trot, and as to cattle, the good-humoured eccentric lady, who Thackeray tells us came from County Kildare, was thinking perhaps of the great Ballinasloe Fair where cattle and sheep assemble in greater numbers, I believe, than at any other live stock fair in the United Kingdom.

On the first Monday in October, 1891, to a special train of empty carriages run by the Midland from Dublin for the purposes of this fair, a vehicle, called the directors' saloon was attached, and in it the chairman of the company, most of the directors and the principal officers travelled to Ballinasloe, there to remain until the conclusion of the fair at the end of the week. It was my first introduction to Ballinasloe.

This saloon merits a word or two. It was built in the year 1844, was originally the property of William Dargan, the well-known contractor and the promoter of the Dublin Exhibition of 1853, whose statue adorns the grounds that front the Irish National Gallery. Dargan made the Midland railway from Athlone to Galway, completed the work before the specified

To face page 124.



WILLIAM DARGAN

contract time (in itself a matter worthy of note), and on its completion in 1851, presented this saloon carriage to the company, which also, I think, deserves to be recorded. Thus, in 1891, it was nearly 50 years' old and was handsome still. The panels were modelled on the old stage coach design, and a great bow window adorned each end. In the seventies and eighties it enjoyed the distinction of being the favourite carriage, on the Midland, of the Empress of Austria in her hunting days in Meath. This fine old carriage, now in its 75th year, does good work still. It has had a new under frame, its roof has been raised, and it looks good for another quarter of a century. Perhaps, granting an originally sound constitution, its longevity is largely due to the regular life it has led, never having been overworked, and having enjoyed many periods of rest.

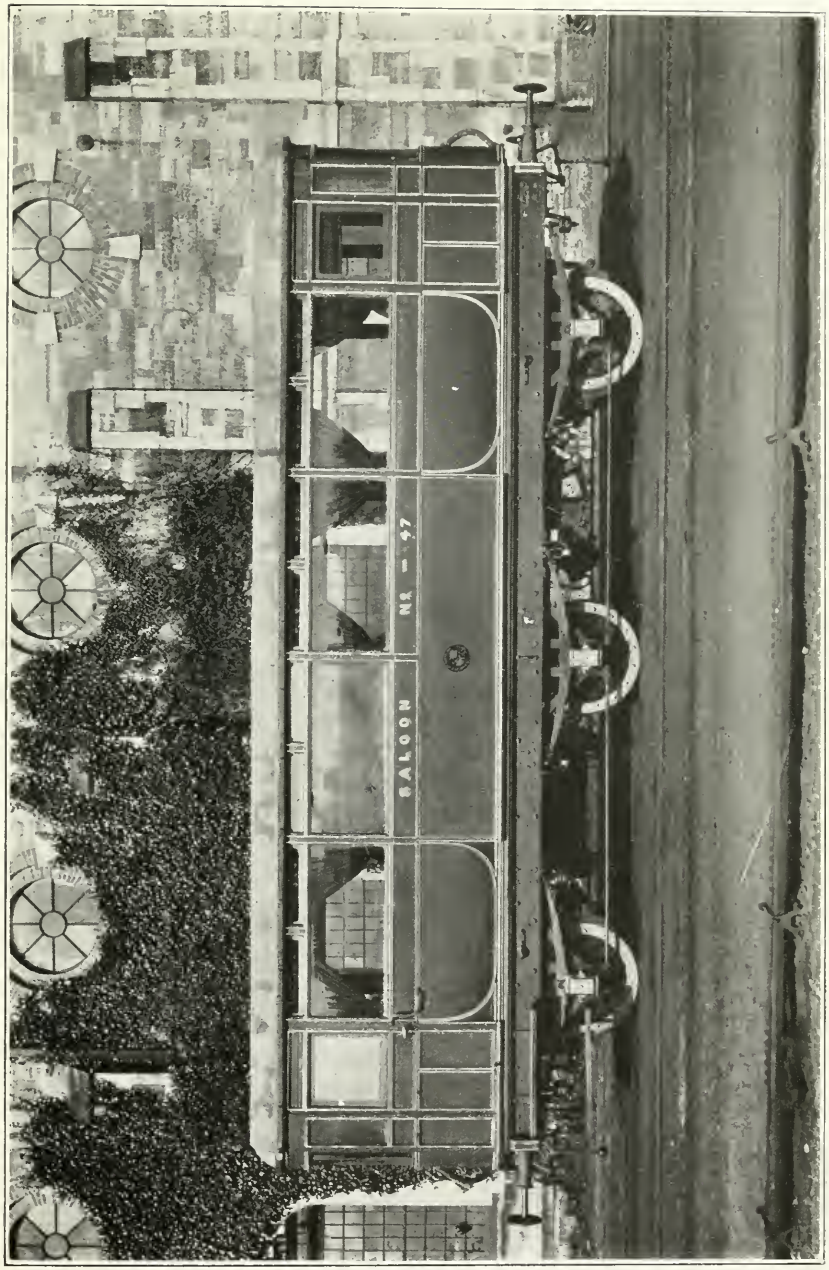
Balinasloe fair has two specially big days—Tuesday and Friday—the former devoted to the sale of sheep and the latter to cattle, though in fact its commerce in cattle, sheep, horses, pigs, calves, rams and goats, not to mention donkeys and mules, goes on more or less briskly throughout the whole week, Saturday being remnant day when jobbers pick up bargains. In 1891 the fair was not, and is not now, what it once was, which recalls the answer a witty editor of *Punch* once made to a friend. Said the said friend: " My dear fellow, *Punch* is not so good as it used to be." " No, it never was," came the quick rejoinder. But of Ballinasloe fair I cannot say *it* never was, for a hundred years ago, in Peggy O'Dowd's time, in the west of Ireland it was the great event of the year, not only for the sale of flocks and herds, but also for social gatherings, fun and frolic, so at least I am told by the oldest inhabitant. An older account still, says these fairs were a time for games and races, pleasure and amusement, and eating and feasting, whilst another record describes them as places " where there were food and precious raiment, downs and quilts, ale and flesh meat, chessmen and chess boards, horses and chariots, greyhounds, and playthings besides." It is curious that dancing is not mentioned, but dancing in the olden days in Ireland was not, I believe, much indulged in. Eighty years ago over 80,000 sheep entered the fair, and 20,000 cattle.

Arrived at Ballinasloe we established ourselves in quarters that were part of the original station premises. These consisted of a good sized dining-

room, six bedrooms, and an office for the manager and his clerk. The walls and ceilings of the rooms were sheeted with pitch pine and varnished. They were very plainly furnished, the only thing in the way of decoration being a production in watercolour representing a fair green crowded with herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, and adorned with sundry pastoral and agricultural emblems, from the brush of my friend *Cynicus*. This I framed and hung in the dining-room. As it had columns for recording statistics of the fair for a period of years, it was instructive as well as ornamental. Three of the bedrooms were on the ground floor and were small apartments. The upstair rooms were much larger, were situated in the roof, and were lit by skylight windows which commanded a limited view of the firmament above but none whatever of the green earth below. These upper rooms were reached by an almost perpendicular staircase surmounted by a trap door, a mode of access convenient enough for the young and active, but not suitable for those of us who had passed their meridian. Two of these rooms were double-bedded and all three led into each other. In the innermost, Atock, our locomotive engineer, and I chummed together. He had slept there for many years, with two previous managers, and, in Robinson Crusoe fashion, had recorded the years by notches in a beam of the ceiling. The notches for him then counted twenty-three years, and number one he notched for me. Every morning an old jackdaw perched on a chimney outside our skylight, and entertained us with his chatter. Atock said the old bird had perched there during all his time; and as long as I visited Ballinasloe—a period of nearly twenty years, he regularly reappeared.

To be able once a year to entertain friends and customers of the company was one of the reasons, probably the main reason, why the directors passed the fair week at Ballinasloe. Their hospitality was not limited to invitations to dinner, for guests were welcomed, without special invitation, to breakfast and lunch and light refreshments during the day. It was an arrangement which gave pleasure to both hosts and guests, and was not without advantage to the company. A good dinner solves many a difficulty, whilst the post-prandial cigar and a glass of grog, like faith, removes mountains. One who, in the last century, became a great English statesman (Lord John Russell) when twenty years of age was in Spain. The Duc

To face page 126



THE DARGAN SALOON

d'Infantado was President of the Spanish Ministry at the time. The Duke of Wellington was there too, and great banquets were being given. The *Duc* had more than once visited Lord John's home and enjoyed its hospitality, but he neglected to invite Lord John to any of his banquets; and this is the cutting comment which the youthful future statesman recorded in his diary: "The Infantado, notwithstanding the champagne and burgundy he got at Woburn, has not asked me. Shabby fellow! It is clear he is unfit for the government of a great kingdom."

In the creature comforts provided at Ballinasloe the working staff was not forgotten. Adjacent to the station was a large room in which meals were provided for the men, and another large room was furnished as a dormitory. Two long sleeping carriages had also been built for the accommodation of drivers, guards and firemen, which were used also for other fairs as well as that of Ballinasloe.

Ballinasloe was new to me, and I felt not a little anxious concerning the working of the fair traffic, which I knew was no child's play, and which I was told was often attended with serious delays. Early on Tuesday morning I was awakened, long before daylight, by the whistling of engines, the shunting of wagons and the shouting of men. My friend Atock and I rose early, went along to the loading banks where we found the work in full swing and one special train loaded with sheep ready to start. The entraining of sheep, not so difficult or so noisy a business as the loading of cattle, is attended with much less beating of the animals and with fewer curses; but there was noise enough, and I can, in fancy, hear it ringing in my ears now. Throughout the day I was besieged by grumbling and discontented customers: want of wagons, unfair distribution, favouritism, delays, were the burden of their complaints, and I had to admit that in the working of the Ballinasloe fair traffic all was not perfect. The rolling stock was insufficient; trains after a journey to Meath or Dublin with stock had to return to Ballinasloe to be loaded again, which was productive of much delay; and what added to the trouble was that everyone seemed to have a hand in the management of the business. It gave me much to think about. Before the next year's fair I had the whole arrangements well thrashed out, and when the eventful week arrived, placed the working of the traffic under the

sole control of my principal outside men, with excellent results. In the course of a year or two the directors opened the purse strings and considerably increased the engine and wagon stock of the company which helped further, and by that time I had in charge an official, of whose energy and ability it is impossible to speak too highly, Thomas Elliott, then a promising young assistant, now the competent Traffic Manager of the railway. Under his management the work at Ballinasloe has for many years been conducted with clock-work regularity.

In 1891 there were 25,000 sheep at the fair, 10,000 cattle and 1,500 horses, and the company ran 43 special trains loaded with stock. The sheep fair is held in Garbally Park, on the estate of Lord Clancarty, and the counting of the sheep through a certain narrow *gap*, and the rapidity and accuracy with which it is done, is a sight to witness.

The hospitality part of the business was attended with the success it deserved, and helped to smooth the difficulties of the situation. I remember well our dinner on the Tuesday night. On the Monday we dined alone, directors and officers only, but on Tuesday the week's hospitality began. That night our table was graced with five or six guests, one being Robert Martin, of Ross, a famous wit and *raconteur*, and the author of *Killaloe*. It was a delightful party, for your Galway gentleman is a genial fellow, who likes a good dinner, and a good story which he tells to perfection. Sir Ralph never took the head of the table, liking best a less prominent seat; but his seat, wherever he chose to sit, always seemed to be to the central place. Never lacking natural dignity, he was not punctilious in mere matters of form. Secure in his authority, to its outward semblance he was rather indifferent. Another delightful guest was Sir George (then Mr.) Morris, brother of the late Lord Morris, the distinguished judge. Until a few months previously, Mr. Morris had been a director of the company, but had resigned upon his apointment to the position of Vice-President of the Irish Local Government Board. He, too, was a Galway man; big, handsome, with a fine flowing beard, a fund of humour, and the most genial disposition imaginable. His anecdotes were ever welcome, and the smallest incident, embellished by his wit and fancy, and told in his rich brogue, which he loved, were always sufficient to adorn a tale. He was rare company, and though, perhaps, he could not, like Swift, have written eloquently

on a broomstick, he could always talk delightfully on any subject he chose.

Whilst Sir Ralph remained chairman of the company, which he did until the year 1904, the directors annual stay at Ballinasloe and its attendant hospitality continued. He was not likely to give up a good old custom. But time inevitably brings changes; for some years now the old hospitality has ceased, the rooms at Ballinasloe are turned into house accommodation for one or two of the staff, and the great fair is worked with no more ado than a hundred other fairs on the line. Not many complaints are made now, for delays and disappointments are things of the past. Yet I dare say there are some who, still attending the fair, look back with regret on the disappearance of the good old days.

Ballinasloe station is on the main line to Galway, 34 miles distant from the " City of the Tribes." Galway is the principal western terminus of the Midland railway. It was once a famous city, but its glory has gone. In 1831 its population was 33,000; to-day it is 13,000! Then, measured by inhabitants, it was the fifth town in Ireland; now it is the eighth. Then it had a large trade with Spain and France, and was a place of note for general trade and commerce; now its harbour is almost idle, and its warehouses and stores nearly empty. Many of its stately old houses have disappeared, and those that remain are mostly now tenements of the poor. Not so very long ago Galway had a trans-Atlantic steamship service, and when the railway was opened in 1851, there was opened also a fine hotel adjoining the station, which the company had built, chiefly for trans-Atlantic business, at a cost of £30,000. It may be that better times are in store. Some day great harbour works will adorn the bay of Galway, from which fine steamers, forming part of an Imperial route to our Dominions and beyond, shall sail, and shorten the Atlantic voyage. A tunnel too, *uniting* Great Britain and Ireland, may be made, which all will agree, is " a consummation devoutly to be wished."

Galway is the gateway to Connemara, and Connemara is one of the best places under the sun for a healthy and enjoyable holiday. To be sure the sun does not always shine when expected, but he is seen much oftener than is generally believed. Of course, it sometimes rains, but the rain never lasts long, for no place has such quick and surprising climatic changes as the west

of Ireland or such enchanting atmospheric effects. I soon became enamoured of Connemara, and for several years, in whatever time I could call my own, explored its mountain roads and valleys, sometimes on horseback, sometimes afoot, and sometimes on bicycle or outside car. The construction of our "Balfour" extension line from Galway to Clifden, began in 1891 and finished in 1895, often called me on business to the wilds it penetrated, and gladly I always answered the call. Sometimes on these excursions one had to rough it a little, for hotel accommodation was scarce and scanty in some of the districts, but in one's early forties such trifles scarcely count.

As soon as I took up office at Broadstone, Sir Ralph informed me I was to be chairman of the Midland Great Western Benefit Society, which was partly a sick fund, partly a pension fund and applied to all the wages staff. It was managed by a committee of twelve, half of whom were appointed by the directors and half by the employees. Gladly I undertook a post which would bring me into close touch with the men. I made a point of never, if I could help it, being absent from a committee meeting; nor, more particularly, from the annual general meeting of the society when I had to give an address. It was always to me a pleasure to meet the men, to learn their views, and to help them as far as I could. This they soon discovered, and I had the satisfaction of knowing that I was liked and trusted. Early in life I had learned to sympathise with the wants and wishes of others, and sympathy I found increased one's power of usefulness. By sympathy I do not mean agreeing always with the men and their views, and I never hesitated to strongly express to them my own convictions, and rarely it was that they ever in the least resented the plainest speaking. I believe if the responsible leaders of labour would follow a similar course, it would be better for themselves, for the men they lead, and for the world at large. The deputy-chairman of the society was Michael O'Neill, the audit accountant of the company, and if ever a plain-spoken man, blunt and direct of speech existed, it was he. Every word he spoke had the ring of honest sincerity. To the men he spoke more plainly even than I, and him they never resented. I think their trust in him exceeded their trust in me. True he was Irish and I was not, and then they had known him much longer than me; and so, small blame to them, said I. One good thing for the society I managed to do. I induced

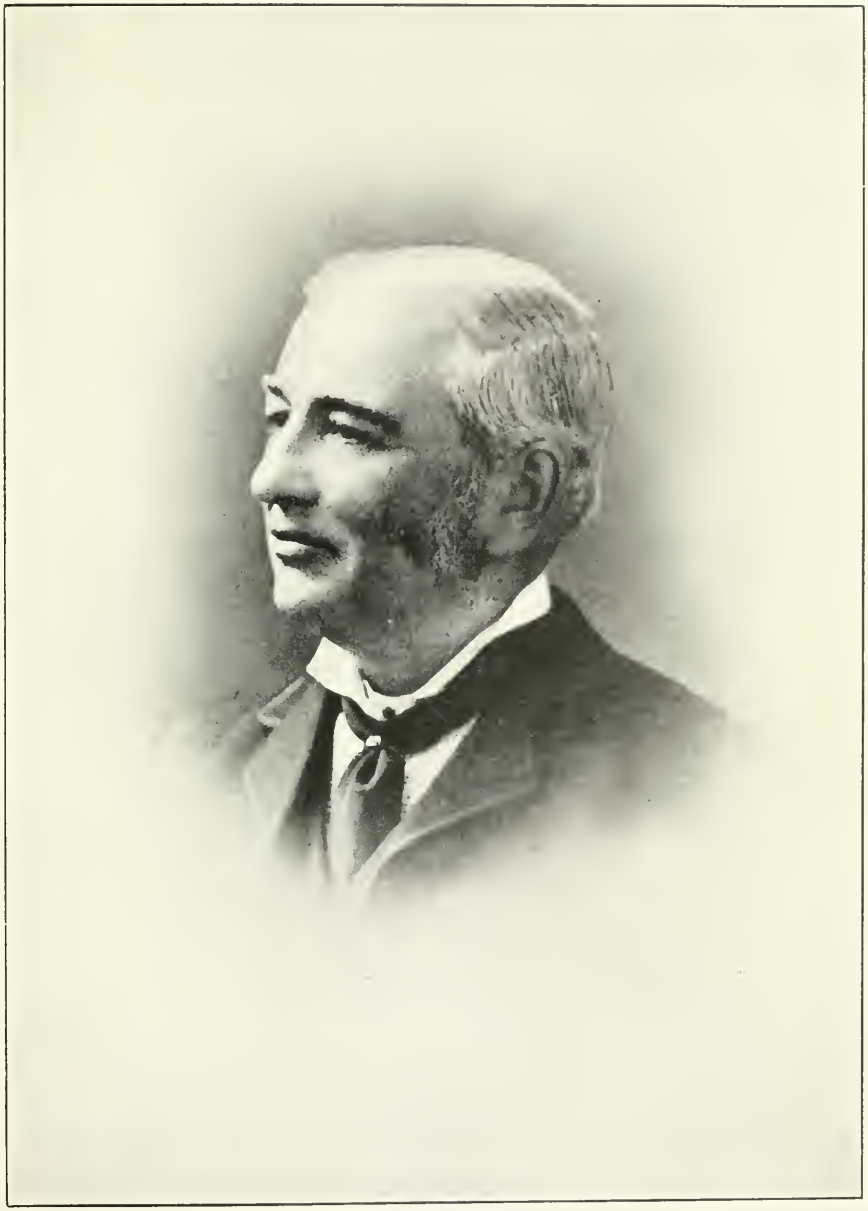
the directors to treble the company's annual contribution to its funds, a substantial benefit, of course, to the men. I remained chairman of the society, and Michael O'Neill its deputy chairman till 1912, when the National Insurance Act came into operation. Then, by a resolution of a majority of its members, it was wound up, to the regret, however, of many of them, who preferred their own old institution which they knew so well, and in the management of which they had a voice, to what some of them styled " a new-fangled thing."

The occasions on which I have met, for the first time, men eminent in the railway world, and for whom I have had great admiration, have always left upon me very clear impressions, and this was particularly so in the case of Sir George Findlay, the General Manager of the London and North-Western Railway. He was not, however, Sir George when I met him first, but plain Mr. Findlay. It was in the year 1891, the occasion being one of the periodical visits to Ireland of the London and North-Western chairman, directors, and principal officers. They gave a dinner at their hotel in Dublin to which, with other Irish railway representatives, I was invited. My seat at dinner was next to Mr. Findlay, and I had much conversation with him. Then in his sixty-third year, he was, perhaps, interested in a young Englishman, 21 years his junior, who had not long begun his career as a railway manager, and who showed some eagerness in, and, perhaps, a little knowlege of, railway affairs.

I remember well the impression he made upon me. I felt I was in the presence of a strong, natural man, gifted with great discernment and ability but full also of human kindness. His face was one which expressed that goodness which the consciousness of power imparts to strong natures. He was a notable as well as what is called " a self-made " man, a fact of which he never boasted but I think was a little proud. He commenced work at the early age of fourteen as a mason—a boy help he could only have been—and continued a mason for several years. He was employed in the building of the new Houses of Parliament and much of the stone work and delicate tracery of the great window at the east end of Westminster Hall is the work of his hands. In his twenty-third year he became manager of the Shrewsbury and Ludlow Railway—probably the youngest railway manager recorded.

Ten years later the Shrewsbury railway was acquired by the London and North-Western company, and Findlay, to use his own words, " was taken over with the rest of the rolling stock." This was how his London and North-Western railway career began. He was a tall, portly man of fine presence, distinguished by a large measure of strong, plain, homely commonsense, an absence of prejudice, a great calmness of judgment, and a fearless frankness of speech. His sense of honour was very high, and he impressed upon the service of which he was the executive head that the word of the London and North-Western Railway must always be its bond. " Be slow to promise and quick to perform," was his guiding precept. A born organiser and administrator he knew how to select his men. Before Parliamentary Committees he was the best of witnesses, always cool and resourceful, with great command of temper, full of knowledge, and blest with a ready wit. His services as witness and expert adviser were in great request by railway companies. At the long Board of Trade Inquiry in connection with the *Railway and Canal Traffic Act* and Railway Rates and Charges, in 1889, he was the principal railway witness and was under examination and cross-examination for eight consecutive days. He had a real love for Ireland, was partly Irish himself, his father being Scotch and his mother Irish—a fine blend. Fishing was his chief recreation and this often brought him to the lakes and rivers of Ireland. He asked, was I the son of William Tatlow of the Midland Railway, whom he had met a good many years before on some coal rates question? On my saying, Yes, he was pleased to know that I belonged to a railway family; and said what a fine service the great railway service was, how absorbing the work and what scope it afforded for ambition and ability. He asked about my railway experience, was amused at my reason for leaving Derby and the Midland, and interested at hearing of my work with Mr. Wainwright, whom he had known and esteemed. He was sure I had learned nothing but good from him. I was able, and very glad, of course, to tell Mr. Findlay with what interest Bailey and I had listened for several days to his evidence at Westminster Hall at the Railway Rates Inquiry, and how much we had profited by it. This led to some talk on the great rates question, of which he was a master. I felt he was just a bit surprised to find that I was rather

To face page 132.



SIR GEORGE FINDLAY

well informed upon it, which made me not a little proud. Altogether it was a memorable night, and left me with a feeling of elation such as I had experienced in the meetings I had in Glasgow some years before with Mr. John Burns and Mr. John Walker. How little I thought then, that in less than two years I should follow Mr. Findlay's remains to the grave.

Between the London and North-Western and the Midland Great-Western much good feeling existed. They were natural allies, both greatly interested in the trade and prosperity of Ireland, and of the port of Dublin in particular. As time went on many matters of mutual interest brought me into close relation with the North-Western general manager and other prominent officers of the company.

CHAPTER XXII

A Railway Contest, the Parcel Post, and the Board of Trade

The long-looked for fight in the Committee Rooms at Westminster came at last, as most things that are eagerly looked and longed for do. In May, 1892, a Bill, promoted jointly by the Midland Great-Western and Athenry and Ennis Railway Companies, was considered by a Select Committee of the House of Lords. It was a Bill for the acquisition by the Midland of the Ennis Railway (a line from Athenry to Ennis, 36 miles long), worked but not owned by the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company. The Midland were anxious to buy and the Ennis were willing to sell, but Parliament alone could legalise the bargain. To the Waterford and Limerick, the bare idea of giving up possession of the fair Ennis to their rival the Midland was gall and wormwood; and so they opposed the project with might and main, and they were assisted in their opposition by certain public bodies, some thought as much for the excitement of a skirmish in the Committee Rooms as anything else. The working agreement between the Waterford and Limerick and the Ennis Companies, which had lasted for ten years or so, was expiring; the Ennis Company had grown tired of the union; the Midland had held out to her certain glowing prospects, which had captivated her maiden fancy, and so she was a consenting party to the Midland scheme. The Ennis line, in the Midland eyes, was a prize worth fighting for, forming, as it did, part of a route from Dublin to Limerick in competition with the Great Southern and Western, a company between which and the Midland,

at that time, little love was lost. Those were the days when competitive traffic, gained almost at any cost, was sweet as stolen kisses are said to be.

The proceedings opened on Monday, 16th May. *Ennis* was as familiar to the Committee Rooms as the suit of *Jarndyce and Jarndyce* was to the Court of Chancery. In 1880 the Midland had also sought by Bill to obtain the fair Ennis (with her consent) but had failed; in 1890 the Waterford and Limerick (against her wishes) had essayed to do the same and failed also, and in years long prior to these, other attempts had been made with the like result. But to proceed: our leading counsel were Sir Ralph (then Mr.) Littler; Mr. Pember, Mr. Pope and other leaders, and a host of juniors being arrayed against us. The straitened circumstances of the Waterford and Limerick; its dearth of rolling stock; its inefficient ways; its failure to satisfy the public; the admitted superiority of the Midland and all its works; the splendid results which would "follow as the night the day," if only Parliament would be wise enough to sanction a union which the public interest demanded and commonsense approved—these were the points on which our counsel exercised their forensic skill, expended their eloquence, and to which they directed the evidence. Amongst our supporters we had some excellent witnesses, one, a well-known cattle dealer, named Martin Ryan. The question of *running powers* was prominent throughout the case and had been much debated and discussed. Ryan's evidence was not, however, concerned with this, but in his cross-examination, relative to something he had stated in his evidence-in-chief, he was asked this question: "If a beast got on to the line as a train came along, what would happen to the beast?" "It would exercise its running powers," answered Mr. Ryan, amidst great laughter. As good as Stephenson's answer about the "coo," said Mr. Pope.

On the fourth day of the proceedings I made my *début* as a Parliamentary witness. In the preparation of my evidence I had expended much time and trouble, keeping well in mind the way in which Mr. Wainwright used to prepare his. Before my examination-in-chief concluded, a short adjournment for lunch took place—a scramble at the refreshment bars in the lobbies, where wig and gown elbowed with all and sundry; where cold beef, cold tongue, cold pie, and, coldest of all cold comestibles, cold custard,

were swallowed in hot haste, washed down with milk and soda, or perhaps with something stronger. "Quick lunches" they were with a vengeance. Time was money, and in the brief interval allowed, more than lunch had to be discussed. Sir Ralph, Mr. Findlay (who was helping us) and I, had our hasty lunch together. When it was over we discussed the morning's proceedings, and Mr. Findlay, to my great satisfaction, said I was doing well—very well indeed, for a first appearance. Then, in a kind and fatherly way, he gave me some good advice: Don't show too much eagerness, he said: don't go quite so much into detail; keep on broader lines; speak deliberately and very distinctly; make your points as plain as a pikestaff; rub them well in; don't try to make too many points, but stick fast to the important ones. You've a good manner in the box, he said; remember these things and you'll make an excellent witness. Then he added: above all, whilst giving your leading evidence never forget the *cross* that has to follow. Be always as frank as you can, and never lose command of your temper. These were not his very words. I do not pretend that he expressed himself with such sententious brevity, though he never wasted speech, but they are the pith and marrow of his admonitions. For twenty years or so from then nearly every session saw me in the Committee Rooms, not always on the business of my own company, as other Irish railway companies on several occasions sought my help in their Parliamentary projects. Mr. Findlay's advice I never forgot.

In the afternoon my cross-examination began. The final question put to me by our counsel was: "Lastly, if this amalgamation is carried out, do you think the public would be served by it, and if so, how?" This appeared to me a great chance for a little speech, so I summed up as forcibly and graphically as I could all the advantages that would follow if the Bill were passed. Then my cross-examination commenced, and the first words addressed to me, by Mr. Pembroke Stephens, were: "I do not think that one could have made a better speech oneself, if one had been on your side." "Not half so good," said Mr. Littler in a stage whisper. I thought Mr. Stephens spoke satirically, but remembered Mr. Findlay's advice, and if I flushed inwardly, as I believe I did, no outward sign escaped me. After Mr. Stephens, three other opposing counsel fired their guns, but I withstood their

shot and shell, and when I came out of the box Mr. Findlay said I had done well. This was praise enough for me. Then he gave his evidence in his usual masterly convincing way and I listened in admiration.

We made a good fight I know, the odds were in our favour and success seemed assured. Our opponents then presented their case, and still we felt no doubt; but Fortune is a fickle jade and at the last she left us in the lurch. On the eighth day of the proceedings the Chairman announced: "The Committee are of opinion that it is not expedient to proceed with the Bill." This was the *coup de grace*. No reasons are ever given by a Committee for their decision and the contending parties are left to imagine them. The losing side sometimes has the hardihood to think a decision is wrong. I believe we thought so; and I know that *Ennis*, who was thus doomed to a further period of single blessedness, thought the same.

In a previous chapter I have spoken of the *Parcel Post Act* of 1882, and mentioned the share of the receipts apportioned to the railway companies of the United Kingdom. The Act also prescribed the manner in which this share was to be divided amongst the respective railways. When it was devised the method seemed fair to all, and had the consent of all. But the best of theories do not always stand the test of practice and so it was found in this case. It did not suit Ireland. We discovered that the Irish railways were, in equity, entitled to more than the scheme awarded them, and Mr. Alcorn, the Accountant of the Great Southern and Western Railway, discovered the way to set the matter right; but it could not be righted without the consent of the Parcel Post Conference, a body which sat at the Railway Clearing House in London, and was composed of the managers of all the railways parties to the parcel post scheme, some eighty or so in number. On the 10th November, 1892, we brought our case before that body, and Colhoun, Robertson and I were the spokesmen for the Irish Railways. On the previous day we had met Sir George Findlay (he had been knighted this year) and had satisfied him of the justice of our claim. He promised to support us. The meeting commenced at 10 o'clock. We made our speeches, which were not long, for our printed statement had been in each member's hands for some time. Clear as our case was to us the Conference seemed unconvinced, and we began to fear an adverse vote. Sir George was

not present, something had happened, for he was not the man to disappoint his friends without grave cause. Voting seemed imminent. Robertson whispered to me, "For heaven's sake, Tatlow, get on your legs again and keep the thing going; Findlay may be here any moment." I was supposed to be the glibbest of speech of our party, and up I got. But Mr. Thompson (afterwards Sir James), the *beau*, was in the chair, and thought there had been talking enough. However, like the Irishman I was not, I went on, and —at that moment entered Sir George! The scene was changed; the day was won! A Sub-Committee of seven, three of whom were Colhoun, Robertson and myself, was appointed to follow up the matter, and ultimately the Irish proposal was adopted.

It was a very busy period, this year of 1892, and as interesting as busy. On the 20th June the *Railway Rates and Charges (Athenry and Ennis Junction Railways) Order Confirmation Act*, 1892, received the Royal Assent. It applied to all the railways in Ireland and contained the Revised Classification and Maximum Rates and Charges settled after long inquiries under the *Railway and Canal Traffic Act*, 1888, and which were to control the future rates to be charged by the companies. Only six months were allowed in which to revise all rates and bring them into conformity with the new classification and the new conditions—an absurdly short time, for the work involved was colossal. But it had to be done. Robert Morrison, Michael O'Neill and I, took off our coats and worked night and day. We had the satisfaction of accomplishing the task in the allotted time, which not every company was able to do. Generous, as always, Sir Ralph in his speech to the shareholders in February, 1893, said: "I wish to express that we are greatly indebted to Mr. Tatlow for the care and anxiety with which he has endeavoured to arrange this important rates matter. He has worked most energetically; has attended the Committees of the Board of Trade, and the Parliamentary Committee, and he is now seeing traders constantly. I may tell you that I and my brother directors place the most implicit reliance on our manager, and I am satisfied that anything he has done has been reasonable to the traders and for the benefit of the shareholders." This was warm praise, and the more welcome, being, as it was, the spontaneous expression of what I knew he felt.

My meetings with the traders usually, but not invariably, resulted in friendly settlements. The great firm of Guinness and Company were not so easily satisfied, and offered a *stout* resistance which correspondence and conference failed to overcome. Under the Railway and Canal Traffic Act a mode of dealing with the *impasse* was provided by conciliation proceedings presided over by the Board of Trade. This we took advantage of, and after several meetings in London a compromise was effected. It was then that I met for the first time Mr. Francis Hopwood, who had just been appointed Secretary to the Railway Department of the Board of Trade. I liked his way and thought that conciliation could not be in better hands than his.

The Board of Trade is more or less a mythical body, but very practical I found it on these and all other occasions. Its proper designation is, I believe, " Committee of Privy Council for Trade." This Committee was first appointed in Cromwell's time, and was revised under Charles II., as " Committee of Privy Council for Trade and Foreign Plantations," under which title it administered the Colonies. When the United States became independent, Burke in a scathing speech, moved and carried the abolition of this *paid* Committee, which included Gibbon as its Secretary. However, the Board of Trade could not be spared, and so it was restored by Order in Council in 1786. Under that order the principal officers of State, and certain members of the Privy Council, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, have, *ex officio*, seats on the Committee, although no record exists of His Grace having ever left his arduous duties at Lambeth to attend the Committee. Its jurisdiction extended as trade and commerce developed and railways appeared on the scene, and gradually it was divided into departments, and so the *Board of Trade* came into being. Like Topsy it " grow'd." The Board of Trade is, in fact, a mere name, the president being practically the secretary for trade, the vice-president having, for 50 years past, been a Parliamentary secretary with duties similar to those of an under-secretary of State. At present, besides the president (who has usually a seat in the Cabinet), the Parliamentary secretary and a permanent secretary, there are six assistant secretaries (in late war time many more), each in charge of a department.

In charge of the railway department in 1893 was, as I have said, Mr. Francis Hopwood. He became Sir Francis in 1906, and from then onwards

advanced from office to office and from honour to honour, until, during his secretaryship of the Irish Convention in 1917, his public services were rewarded with a peerage. As railway secretary of the Board of Trade he was particularly distinguished for tact, strength and moderation. Singularly courteous and obliging on all occasions, I, personally, have been much indebted to him for help and advice.

But all was not sunshine and happiness in this busy year of 1892. A dark cloud of sorrow overshadowed it. On a fateful day in January I lost, with tragic suddenness, the younger of my two sons, a bright amiable boy, of a sunny nature and gentle disposition. He was accidentally killed on the railway.

CHAPTER XXIII

The "Railway News," the International Railway Congress, and a Trip to Spain and Portugal

In Chapter XX I recorded the death of my old friend W. F. Mills, which took place whilst I was writing that chapter. Now, as I pen these lines, I hear of the loss of another old familiar railway friend; not indeed a sentient being like you, dear reader, or him or me, yet a friend that lacked neither perception nor feeling.

The *Railway News* on Saturday, the 30th day of November, 1918, issued its last number, and, as a separate entity, ceased to be, its existence then merging into that of the *Railway Gazette*. I am sad and sorry for I knew it well. For forty years it was my week-end companion; for ten years or more, in the April of life, I contributed regularly to its pages; and never, during all the years, have its columns been closed to my pen. One of its editors, F. McDermott, has long been my friend, and its first editor, Edward McDermott, his father, a grand old man, was kind to me in my salad days and encouraged my budding scribbling proclivities. He and Samuel Smiles, the author of *Self Help* (then Secretary of the South Eastern Railway), were, in 1864, its joint founders.

"Death," the Psalmist saith, "is certain to all." In 1893, the railway world lost one whom it could ill spare. In the month of March, after a short illness, Sir George Findlay died at the early age of 63. Gifted of the gods, in the midst of his work, young in mind and spirit, his faculties in full

vigour, he was suddenly called away. His funeral, I need not say, was attended by railway men from all parts of the kingdom. I was one of those who travelled to London to follow his remains to their resting place.

Further public railway legislation was enacted in 1893 and 1894, and four important Acts were passed. The first was the *Railway Regulation Act*, 1893. It dealt with the hours of labour of railway servants, a subject which for some time previously had been enjoying the attention of the Press. It culminated in the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee. In February, 1891, a Select Committee, consisting of 24 members, with Sir Michael Hicks Beach as chairman, was formed, "To inquire whether, and if so, in what way, the hours of railway servants should be restricted by legislation." The Committee examined numerous railway servants and officials, and reported to Parliament, in June, 1892. I was summoned by the Committee to give evidence and appeared before them in London on 24th March of that year. My business was to furnish facts concerning the hours of duty of the employees on my own railway and the conditions of their work. This I did pretty fully and embraced the opportunity of showing how different were the circumstances of Irish railways compared with English, and how legislation suitable to one country might be very unsuitable to the other. It scarcely needed saying that England was an industrial country whilst Ireland was agricultural; that England, with 620 people to the square mile, was thickly populated and Ireland with 135 sparsely; that population meant trains and traffic; that in England railway traffic amounted to about £7,000 per mile per annum and in Ireland a little over £1,000; that in Ireland on many lines not more than five or six trains ran each way daily, and on others only three or four, whilst in England, on most lines, the *hourly* number exceeded these. When the Committee rose Sir Michael engaged me, informally, in conversation for a little while. He was curious concerning some of the facts I had adduced, particularly as to the Midland line and the country it served.

In their report the Committee stated they had confined their inquiry to the hours of duty of those classes of railway servants that were engaged in working traffic, viz., drivers, firemen, guards, signalmen, shunters, platelayers and porters, and had not dealt with other classes; a wise distinction I thought. It was much easier, they said, to regulate the hours of persons

occupying fixed posts of duty within reasonable limits, than those of the running staff on railways, on account of the variety in the nature of the work. They reported also that they were unable to recommend a " legal day," as they considered it would be found impracticable owing to the number of cases which must necessarily be admitted as exceptions to any fixed limit of hours, adding that the hours of railway servants engaged in working traffic cannot be regulated like those in a factory, which, I may add, experience has abundantly shown. I believe, and have always believed, in reasonable working hours, and have often worked unreasonably long hours myself in endeavouring to arrange them for others; and more than once when I have re-arranged a rota for drivers, firemen and guards, to my own satisfaction, I have been begged by the men concerned not to make any change and to let well alone; not, of course, because the new rota gave shorter hours, but because it prevented the men from getting to their homes or interfered with something else that suited them. Sometimes I gave way to the men and sometimes I stuck to my revised rota. Every case varied and required special consideration. The Committee also said: " It is universally admitted that the railway service is very popular under existing conditions; and several railway servants who appeared as witnesses protested vigorously against any interference by Government or the Legislature." State interference, I know, is the fashion now; but the blind worship of *any fashion* is but weakness and folly.

The Act of 1893 was the outcome of the Report. It provided that on representation being made to the Board of Trade that the hours of any railway servants were excessive, the Board might inquire into the complaint, and order the company concerned to submit an amended schedule of time of duty for such servants, and if the railway company failed to comply with the order the matter might then be referred to the Railway Commissioners whose order the company must obey under a penalty of £100 a day. I do not think any company was ever fined; nor do I, indeed, remember the Commissioners' services being required. If they were, the occasions were few and far between, as the companies generally loyally carried out the provisions of the Act.

In 1894 was passed the *Notice of Accidents Act.* Where any person

employed in the construction, use, working or repair of any railway, tramroad, tramway, gas works, canal bridge, tunnel, harbour, dock or other work authorised by Parliament, suffered (it said) an accident causing loss of life or bodily injury, the employer must notify the Board of Trade, and if the Board of Trade considered the case of sufficient importance, they may (it provided) direct the holding of a formal inquiry; a report of such inquiry to be presented to the Board of Trade, which may (it stated) be made public in such manner as they think fit. As far as accidents to railway servants were concerned, I can vouch that these inquiries were pretty often held, and the companies, concerned always for the safety of their employees, never did other than welcome them.

The *Railway and Canal Traffic Act*, 1894, was an Act to *amend* (save the mark!) *The Railway and Canal Traffic Act*, 1888. Its effect, in fact, was to embitter instead of amend. It was, as I have previously indicated, panic legislation yielded in haste to unreasonable clamour, unfair to the railways, and of doubtful advantage to traders. I will say no more lest I say too much.

The fourth of these enactments was the *Diseases of Animals Act*, 1894. It invested the Board of Agriculture with further powers to make orders and regulations respecting animals affected with pleuro-pneumonia or foot-and-mouth disease, particularly with regard to markets, fairs, transit and slaughter houses; for securing the providing of water and food; and for cleansing and disinfecting vessels, vehicles and pens. As regards Ireland the powers were vested in the Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council, and on the establishment of the Department of Agriculture for Ireland, in the year 1899, were transferred to that body.

The International Railway Congress Association is an interesting if not an ancient body. It dates back to the year 1885. Gallant little Belgium was its parent. In 1885, the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the first public railway on the Continent of Europe (the line between Brussels and Malines) was celebrated at Brussels by a Congress convened on the invitation of the Belgian Government, and this meeting was the beginning of the now world-wide association. At the first assembly at Brussels " the study of technical and administrative questions for furthering the progress of the science of

railways " was the avowed object in view; and it has been the serious purpose of every Congress since. But gradually pleasant relaxations, such as lunches, dinners, dances and excursions, for wives and daughters accompanying husbands and fathers graced these gatherings of railway wisdom. During the first ten years the sessions were bi-annual, but since 1895 have been held every five years. Brussels, Milan, Paris, St. Petersburg, London, Washington and Berne have each been the scene of their celebration, and Paris has been favoured twice. For 1915 Berlin was the capital selected, but the war decided against that; and when Berlin shall see the world's railway representatives assembled within her gates only a very bold man will venture to prophesy.

The Congress is composed of some 420 railway systems represented by nearly 1,500 delegates; and any railway company, the wide world over, that possesses a mileage of 62 miles or more is competent for membership. In addition to holding Sessions the Congress publishes a monthly Bulletin (or did prior to the war), containing, besides original articles on all questions relating to the construction, operation, and organisation of railways, reproductions of interesting articles published in the railway and engineering papers of any nation, as well as notices of books and pamphlets on railway questions. The Bulletin contains also all reports prepared for the various Sessions of the Congress and minutes of the discussions. It was a great gathering that the late King Edward (then Prince of Wales) opened on June the 26th, 1895, when the Congress was in London. The scene was the Imperial Institute, and the meetings lasted till July the 9th. From all parts of the globe delegates came. All was not dull routine for British hospitality abounded and the companies vied with each other in worthy entertainments, and Her Majesty the Queen saw fit to signalise the occasion by giving a garden party in its honour.

Mr. W. M. Acworth, the well-known writer on railway economics, and a keen but friendly critic of railway affairs, was appointed Secretary to the English Section of the Congress, and to him fell the principal work connected with the Session. His scholarly and linguistic attainments and his varied travels, fitted him well for the task. My eldest son, then a youth of 18, just entered the railway service, had the good fortune to be selected as one

of Mr. Acworth's assistants. He had not long finished his education in France, and spoke the language fluently, which, of course, was a recommendation. It was valuable experience to him as well as delightful work. He conducted several parties of delegates through various parts of England and Ireland in connection with the many excursions that were arranged for their pleasure and profit. The weather was very hot, and railway travelling at times oppressive, even to delegates from the sunny land of France, and *shandy-gaff*, a beverage new to most of the visitors, was in great request. Said a French delegate one day to my son, as the train was approaching Rugby: "Oh! M'sieu Tatlow, the weather it is so hot; will you not at Rugby give us some of your beautiful *char-a-banc*?" On another occasion he was asked if he would "be so kind as to give the *recipe* for making that beautiful toast."

At the close of the session in London, a number of the foreign delegates, at the invitation of the Irish Railway Companies, visited Ireland, and were shown its railways, and its beauty spots from east to west, from north to south. It is not too much to say they were greatly impressed. The splendid scenery that surrounds the island like a beautiful frame, delighted them, and the excellence of the Irish railways was no little surprise. They did not expect to see such fine carriages, such handsome dining saloons, nor such permanent way and stations. Of course we showed them our best and the best was very good. Ireland is often accused of neglecting her opportunities, but never her hospitality. On this occasion, personified by her railway companies, she neglected neither, and in the latter surpassed herself.

In the autumn of this year I was able to gratify my taste for travel by a longer excursion than usual. Hitherto my furthest flights had been to Paris, Belgium, and Holland, but now I went as far as Spain and Portugal. F. K. was my pleasant companion and we travelled, *viâ* Paris, straight through to Madrid, where we stayed for a week at the Hotel de la Paix, in the bright and busy and sunny Puerto del Sol. In Madrid we visited the Royal Palace (or so much of it as was shown to the public—principally the Royal stables); the Escurial; the Art Galleries and Museums; drove in the Buen Retiro; witnessed a bull fight, which rather sickened us when the horses, which never stood a chance in the contest, were ripped up by the bull; admired dark-eyed senoritas, their mantillas and coquettish fans, enjoyed the

southern sunshine and the Spanish wines; and then left for Lisbon by an *express* train that stopped at nearly every station. At Lisbon three or four days were pleasantly passed, though we were annoyed sometimes by the crowd of persistent beggars that thronged the streets, and who, we were told, pursued their calling by license from the authorities. This was a small matter, however. He who travels should be proof against such minor annoyances. Then Oporto was visited, and the Douro valley, the very centre of the port wine industry. A young Englishman, a wine merchant, accompanied us in our journey through this sultry valley and was our cicerone. Under his guidance we visited many famous "wine lodges," sampled wonderful vintages in most generous glasses, drank old port, green port, tawny port, and I am sure too much port, and when, at last, we reached the port of Biarritz, where we stayed for several days, we blessed its lighter wines and refreshing breezes. After Biarritz Bordeaux detained us for a day or two, and so did Paris, which we found very attractive and refreshing in early November.

This year also had for me a delightful week's interlude, in the month of June, in the Committee Rooms at Westminster. A certain Bill was promoted by an Irish railway company, which we considered an aggressive attempt to invade our territory, and, of course, we vigorously opposed it. Again I had the pleasure of giving evidence and of being cross-examined by Mr. Pembroke Stephens; but the Bill was passed and became an Act. Further sign of vitality it never showed as the line was never made. It is one thing, by the grace of Parliament to obtain an Act, but quite another by the favour of the public to obtain capital. Parliament is often more easily persuaded than the shrewd investor, as many a too sanguine promoter knows.

CHAPTER XXIV

Tom Robertson, more about Light Railways, and the Inland Transit of Cattle

By his friends and intimates he was called *Tom*, and mere acquaintances even usually spoke of him as *Tom Robertson*. Rarely was he designated *Thomas*. A man who is known so familiarly is generally a good fellow, and Tom Robertson was no exception, though he possessed some pretty strong qualities, and was particularly fond of getting his own way.

In his early days at the Great Northern, sundry skirmishes at the Clearing House had taken place between him and me, which for a time produced a certain amount of estrangement, but we afterwards became excellent friends and saw a good deal of each other. He was no longer a *general manager*, having given up that post for another which was pressed upon him—the post of Chairman of the Irish Board of Works. It was certainly unusual, unheard of one might say, in those days, for an important government office to be conferred upon a railway official, though now it would excite but little surprise. The Government it was thought contemplated something in the shape of a railway policy in Ireland, and had spotted Robertson as the man for the job; it was certainly said that someone in high authority, taken greatly by his sturdy independence, his unconventional ways, and his enormous energy, had determined to try the novel experiment which such an appointment meant. I do not think that Robertson himself ever really enjoyed the change. He liked variety it is true, but governmental

ways were not, he often said, his ways, and he seemed to lack the capacity to easily adapt himself to new grooves. Unconventional he certainly was, and never in London even would he wear a tall hat or a tail coat; nor could he ever be persuaded to attend a levee or any State function whatever. He usually dressed in roughish tweeds, with trousers unfashionably wide, and a flaming necktie competing with his bright red cheeks, which contrasted strongly with his dark hair and beard. He was, however, a strong manly fellow, with a great deal of determination mingled with good humour. Usually in high spirits, he often displayed a boyish playfulness that resembled the gambols of a big good-natured dog. He was musical too, and would sing *Annie Laurie* for you at any time, accompanying himself on the piano. To practical joking he was rather addicted, and once I was his reluctant accomplice, but am glad to say it was the last time I ever engaged in such rude pleasantry. I can write of him now the more freely that he is no longer of this world. Excessive energy hastened his death. In 1901 he went to India to investigate for the Government the railways there, and to report upon them. It was a big task, occupied him a long time, and I am told he worked and lived there as though he were in his native temperate zone. His restless energy was due I should say to superabundant vitality. Once, when he and I were in London together, on some railway business, we took a stroll after dinner (it was summertime) and during a pause in our conversation he surprised me by exclaiming: "Tatlow, I'm a restless beggar. I'd like to have a jolly good row with somebody." "Get married," said I. This tickled him greatly and restored his good humour. He lived and died a bachelor nevertheless.

In 1896 the *Railways (Ireland) Act* was passed, and with it Robertson had much to do. Its purpose ran: "To facilitate the construction of Railways and the Establishment of other means of Communication in Ireland, and for other purposes incidental thereto." It provided for further advances by the Treasury, under prescribed conditions, for constructing railways and for establishing lines of steamers, coaches, etc., which were shown to be necessary for the development of the resources of any district, where owing to the circumstances of such district, they could not be made without government assistance. It also authorised the construction and maintenance, as

part of such railways, of any pier, quay or jetty. This little Act, which consisted of thirteen sections (I wonder he did not think the number unlucky), was Robertson's particular pet. Concerning its clauses, from the time they were first drafted, many a talk we had together over a cup of tea with, to use his own expression, " a wee drappie in't." I may have hinted as much, but do not think I have mentioned before that he was a Scotchman and a Highlander.

In the same year was passed the *Light Railways Act*, an Act which applied to Great Britain only. Ireland had already had her share (some thought more than her share) of light railway legislation, with its accompanying doles in the shape of easy loans and free gifts, whilst England and Scotland had been left in the cold. It was their turn now; but as this Act, and the subject of light railways generally, formed the substance of a paper which I prepared and read in 1900 before the International Railway Congress at Paris, and of which I shall speak later on, I will pass it now without more comment.

At Robertson's request I appeared as a witness this year for the Great Northern Railway, before Committees of both Houses of Parliament, in connection with a Bill which sought powers to construct an extension of the Donegal railway from Strabane to Londonderry. Robertson himself did not give evidence in the case. Before the Committees sat he had left the Great Northern for the Board of Works, and Henry Plews, his successor, represented the Great Northern Railway. The proposed line was in direct competition with the Great Northern, and they sought my aid in opposing it. Certainly there was no need for two railways, but Parliament thought otherwise and passed the Bill. Indeed Parliament is not free from blame for many unnecessary duplicated lines throughout the kingdom. *Competition* was for long its fetish; now it is *unification*, and (blessed word!) *co-ordination*. Strange how men are taken with fine words and phrases, and what slaves they are to shibboleths! Before the House of Commons Committee which sat on this Bill I had the pleasure, for the first time, of being examined by Balfour Browne. He was leader in the case for the Great Northern, and I met him also in consultations which took place. Since then I have crossed swords with him too, and always I must confess with keen enjoyment. His

knowledge of railway matters was so remarkable, his mind so practical, alert, and luminous, that it was rare excitement to undergo cross-examination at his hands. In his book, *Forty Years at the Bar*, he himself says: "I have not had many opportunities of giving evidence, but I confess that when I have been called as a witness I have enjoyed myself." Well, I can say that I have had many such opportunities, and can truthfully declare that I have enjoyed them all.

A few weeks holiday in Holland, Cologne, the Rhine and Frankfort, with some days on the homeward journey in Brussels, all in company of my dear delightful friend, Walter Bailey, complete the annals of this year; except that I recall a little arbitration case in which I was engaged. It was during the summer, in July I think. The Grand Canal (not the canal which belongs to the Midland and is called the Royal) is a waterway which traverses 340 miles of country. Not that it is all canal proper, some of it being canalised river and loughs; but 154 miles are canal pure and simple, the undisputed property of the Grand Canal Company. On a part of the river Barrow which is canalised, an accident happened, and a trader's barge was sunk and goods seriously damaged. Dispute arose as to liability, and I was called on to arbitrate. To view the scene of the disaster was a pleasant necessity, and the then manager of the company (Mr. Kirkland) suggested making a sort of picnic of the occasion; so one morning we left the train at Carlow, from whence a good stout horse towed, at a steady trot, a comfortable boat for twenty miles or so to the *locus* of the accident. We were a party of four, not to mention the hamper. It was delightfully wooded scenery through which we passed, and a snug little spot where we lunched. After lunch and the arbitration proceedings had been dispatched, our pegasus towed us back.

I must return again to Robertson, the Board of Works, and light railways. Preliminary to the authorisation of light railways in Ireland, the legislation which had been passed concerning them required that the Board of Works should appoint fit and proper persons to make public inquiry regarding the merits of proposed lines, as to engineering, finance, construction, the favour or objection with which they were regarded by landowners and others, the amount of capital required, the assistance that would

be given by landowners, local authorities and others towards their construction, and their merit generally from all points of view; such fit persons after they had done all this, to report to the Board of Works. In 1897 Robertson thought that " Joseph Tatlow of Dublin, and William Roberts of Inverness, were fit and proper persons " for conducting the necessary inquiry concerning a proposed light railway in north-west Donegal, from Letterkenny to Burtonport, a distance of 50 miles. William Roberts was the Engineer of the Highland Railway of Scotland, a capable, energetic, practical man, and a canny Scot. This line was promoted by the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company. Roberts and I gladly undertook the work. We held public meetings, which were largely attended (for it was an *event* in Donegal) in Letterkenny, Falcarragh and Burtonport, examined nearly fifty witnesses, and heard a great variety of evidence.

But the hearing of evidence was by no means all we did. It was our duty to examine the route, and determine if it were the best practicable route (keeping steadily in view that the available funds were limited in amount), scrutinise and criticise the estimates, consider the stations to be provided, inquire as to the probable traffic and working expenses, and inform ourselves thoroughly on all the aspects and merits of the case. We drove some 240 miles, not of course by motor car (motors were not common then) but with stout Irish horses, and inspected the country well. After we presented our report, certain procedure followed; the Baronies guaranteed interest on £5,000 of the capital; the government gave the rest (some £313,000) as a free grant; an Order in Council was passed, and the line was made and opened for traffic in 1903. It has more than verified all predictions as to its usefulness, and has proved a blessing to north-west Donegal. My relations with the line by no means ended with the inquiry, and more about it will later on appear in this authentic history.

In the same year, 1897, with G. P. Culverwell, the engineer of my old railway, the Belfast and County Down, as co-adjutor, I was entrusted by Robertson with a similar inquiry concerning the Buncrana to Carndonagh line (18 miles in length) also in Donegal, and also promoted by the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Company. It was a smaller affair than the Burtonport line, but involved similar pleasant and interesting work. This line was also constructed and was opened in 1901.

Pleasant times, Joseph Tatlow, you seem to have had, and much variety and diversion; but what of your own railway and your duties to it? Well, these Parliamentary proceedings, arbitration cases, and light railway adventures were, after all, only interludes, and I can conscientiously say that the Midland line and its needs and interests were never neglected. I am one of those who always believed that everything which served to enlarge experience and mature judgment made a man more competent for his daily work.

In July a Departmental Committee was appointed by the Board of Agriculture " To inquire into and Report upon the Inland Transit of Cattle." The Committee numbered ten, Sir Wm. Hart Dyke, M.P., being chairman. Three other M.P.s were members of the Committee, one being that redoubtable champion of the cattle trade and chairman of the Irish Cattle Trades Association, Mr. William Field. Two railway representatives were amongst the ten, one of them, Sir William Birt, general manager of the Great Eastern Railway; the other the Honourable Richard Nugent, a director of the Midland Great Western Railway, the latter having considerable experience of the cattle trade and of cattle transit in Ireland. He was no bad judge himself of a beast. He farmed in County Galway, and farming in the west of Ireland meant the raising of cattle, though nowadays some tillage is also done. He loved attending cattle fairs, and more than once turned me out of bed before the break of day to accompany him to a fair green, much to my discomfiture; but so great was *his* enjoyment, and so pleasant and lively his company that I believe I thanked him on each occasion for bringing me out.

Sir William Hart Dyke did not act as chairman of the Committee; in fact he was prevented by illness from attending any meeting after the first, and in his absence the chair was taken by Mr. Parker Smith, M.P.

The scope of the inquiry included Great Britain and Ireland; but, as the Committee stated in their report, " In Ireland the proportional importance of the cattle trade is much the greater," and that no doubt was why they examined in Dublin 42 witnesses against about half that number in England.

Plews, Colhoun and I gave evidence for the Irish railways, supplemented with testimony on matters of detail by some of our subordinates. My railway (the Midland) being, relatively at any rate, the principal cattle-carrying line in Ireland, it was agreed that I should give the greater part of the

evidence and appear first. The railway companies, of course, came on after the public witnesses had had their say.

The Committee in their report made some useful recommendations both for Great Britain and Ireland, not only in regard to the transit of cattle by railway, but also in reference to public supervision at fairs; accommodation and inspection at ports; the licensing of drovers; dishorning of young cattle, etc. With respect to railway transit the recommendations were directed principally to control and accommodation at stations; pens and loading banks; improvement in cattle trucks; and rest, food and water.

It is but fair to the railway companies to say that for some years previous to the inquiry they had been making constant and steady improvements in these matters, and I believe the Irish Department of Agriculture, which was established by Act of Parliament in 1899, and in which are vested the powers and functions of the Privy Council in regard to live stock, with some added powers as well, would, were they appealed to now, bear testimony to the good work of the Irish railways in regard to the " Inland Transit of Cattle."

CHAPTER XXV

Railway Amalgamation and Constantinople

It would be tedious as well as tiresome to describe the many railway contests in the Committee Rooms at Westminster in which, during the remainder of my managerial career, it was my lot to be engaged; but one great case there was, in 1899 and 1900, which, by its importance to my company and, I may say, to the south and west of Ireland generally, should not pass unnoticed, and of it I propose to give a short account.

It was from the grasp of the Waterford and Limerick, as I have mentioned before, that in 1892 we (the Midland) sought, though unsuccessfully, to snatch possession of the Ennis line. Now the Waterford and Limerick were to lose, not only the Ennis line, but all their lines and their own identity as well. A great struggle ensued which, from the length of time it lasted, and the number of combatants engaged, was one of the biggest railway fights the Committee Rooms had for many a long year witnessed. For 106 days, from first to last, the battle raged. In it thirty-one companies and public bodies participated, most of them being represented by counsel. There was a famous Bar, including all the big-wigs of course, and some lesser wigs, and numbering more than twenty in all. The promoters were very strongly represented, but we had Littler for our leader, who, indeed, was our standing senior counsel. Their team consisted of Pope, Pember, Balfour Browne, Seymour Bushe, McInerny and two juniors; our, much smaller but well selected, of Littler, Blennerhassett and Vesy Knox; the last-named, then a

rising junior, but long since a senior, and for some time past a leader, is still to the front in the bustling, reckless, impatient world of to-day. Most of the others, alas, are no longer with us. Littler, later on was knighted, but is beyond all earthly honours now, and so are Pope, Pember and Blennerhassett.

As I have said, the proceedings occupied two sessions. In the first, 1899, two Bills came before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, one promoted jointly by the Great Southern and Western and the Waterford and Limerick Companies, the other by the Great Southern and the Waterford and Central Ireland. But the Great Southern were the real promoters of both; they paid the piper and, therefore, called the tune. The Great Southern being the largest railway company in Ireland aspired to be greater still, nor need this be considered in the least surprising, for who in this world, great or small, is ever satisfied? The Waterford and Limerick, a line of 350 miles, then ranked fourth amongst the railways of Ireland, and its proposed absorption by the Great Southern and Western Company aroused no little interest. The Central Ireland, a small concern of 65 miles, running from Maryborough to Waterford, was a secondary affair altogether and I shall say little more about it. The Waterford and Limerick had its headquarters at Limerick, its southern terminus at Waterford, its northern at Sligo—a direct run from south to north of 223 miles, certain branch lines making up the rest of its mileage. Its access to Sligo was by means of the Athenry to Tuam, the Tuam to Claremorris and the Claremorris to Collooney lines, all of which it worked. The last-mentioned was one of the " Balfour " light railways (constructed on the ordinary Irish gauge of 5 feet 3 inches) and should have been given to the Midland Company, but by some unfortunate *contretemps*, when constructed, it passed into the hands of the Waterford and Limerick. From Collooney to Sligo (six miles) running powers were exercised by that company over the Midland line into Sligo. This Claremorris-Collooney line intersected the Midland system and in the hands of the Waterford and Limerick Company introduced a competition in Connaught which that poor district could ill afford to bear—a district in which one railway system alone, though it enjoyed the whole of the traffic, would scarcely earn a living. The Waterford and Limerick was not what would be called a prosperous line, nor was its physical condition anything to boast

of, but it had latent possibilities, and was in active competition with the Great Southern. Such railway competition as existed in Ireland was dear to traders and the general public. In country towns in the sister Isle there is not (more the pity!) much afoot in the way of diversion, and to set the companies by the ears or get the better of either one or the other was looked upon as healthy and innocent amusement.

On the 7th of June the contest began, and this, the first engagement, lasted for 44 days, when the Chairman of the Committee announced that the Bills would not be passed. Great was our delight and that of our allies, though the cup of joy was a little dashed on learning that the Great Southern had determined to renew the struggle in the following year.

My company was the principal opponent, and bore the brunt of the fight, though the Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford Railway (now the Dublin and South-Eastern) were vigorous opponents too. A. G. Reid (from Scotland, who I have mentioned before) was general manager of the Dublin and Wicklow Railway. Like myself he is a pensioner now enjoying the evening of life. Living near each other in the pleasant Kingstown-Dalkey district, we meet not infrequently, and when we do our talk, as is natural, often glides into railway reminiscence. We fight our battles over again. We had many allies, prominent amongst them being the City and Harbour Authorities of Limerick. They were represented by good men who were hand and glove with us. Sir (then Mr.) Alexander Shaw, John F. Power and William Holliday were particularly conspicuous for their valuable assistance. Power (well named) was a host in himself. Strong, keen, clever, energetic, enthusiastic, yet cautious and wary, he was a splendid witness. I sometimes said he would have made a fine railway manager, had he been trained to the business. Could I give him higher praise?

Mr. Littler was in great feather at our success. He entertained us (*i.e.*, his Midland clients) to lunch. Over coffee and cigars we learned that he had not been in Ireland for over 20 years; so to equip him the better for next year's fight we invited him over, promising that I would be his faithful cicerone on a tour through the country. As soon as Parliament rose he came, and he and I spent a fortnight together, visiting Limerick, Waterford, Cork, Galway, Sligo and other places. It was a sort of triumphal march, for our

friends, and they were many, warmly welcomed on Irish soil the great English Q.C. who had routed the enemy. Littler enjoyed it immensely, and was charmed with Irish warmth and Irish ways. Full of good humour and good nature himself, with a lively wit, and an easy unaffected manner, he gained new friends to our cause, and increased the zeal of old ones. He was a charming companion, a keen observer and interested in everything he saw and everybody he met.

Before the next session arrived my company determined upon a bold course, and decided to themselves lodge a Bill to acquire the Waterford and Limerick line. There was much to be said for this. With the Waterford and Limerick in our hands the competition, which the public loved, would continue, whilst in the hands of the Great Southern monopoly would prevail. That we would command much public support seemed certain. So in the following year three Bills were presented to Parliament, viz.:—

Midland Great Western
Great Southern and Western and Waterford and Limerick
Great Southern and Western and Waterford and Central Ireland

That Parliament regarded these proposals as being of more than ordinary importance is clear from the fact that it referred the three Bills to a Joint Select Committee of both Houses—Lords and Commons—describing them as "The Railways (Ireland) Amalgamation Bills." An experienced and able chairman was appointed in the person of Lord Spencer.

On the 18th of May the proceedings opened. Day by day every inch of ground was stubbornly fought, and on the 12th of July the decision of the Committee was announced. After the presentation of the Great Southern case our Bill was heard and all the opposition. One of the most effective witnesses for the Great Southern was Sir George (then Mr.) Gibb, general manager of the North-Eastern, the only big railway in the country that enjoyed a district to itself. His *role* was to persuade the Committee that railway monopoly, contrary to accepted belief, was a boon and a blessing, and well he fulfilled his part.

My examination did not take place until July 6th, after nearly all other witnesses had been heard. Mr. Littler intentionally kept me back, which

was a great advantage to me, as when placed in the box I had practically heard what everybody else had said, and the last word, as every woman knows, is not to be despised. Littler took me through my " proof." I had spent the whole of the previous Sunday with him at his house at Palmer's Green and we had gone through it together most carefully. He attached great importance to my direct evidence, and we underlined the parts I was to be particularly strong upon. That I had taken great pains to prepare complete and accurate evidence I need scarcely say, for, as I have stated before, if there is any kind of work I have liked more than another, and into which I have always put my heart and soul, it is this kind. After we had got through I was cross-examined by eight opposing counsel, including Pope, Pember, Balfour Browne and Seymour Bushe. One of the very few things connected with my appearance in the case I have preserved (and this I have kept from vanity I suppose) is a newspaper cutting which says, " In cross-examination Mr. Pope could not get a single point out of Mr. Tatlow. On the contrary it actually made his case stronger. His evidence from beginning to end was most masterly. It was the evidence of a man who knew what he was talking about and who told the truth. Mr. Pope, in the end, agreed with Mr. Tatlow's statement on running powers." Mr. Pope was a big, generous minded man. In the course of his great speech on the case he paid me the very nice compliment of saying that, " Mr. Tatlow went into the box and with a candour that did him great credit at once admitted that they (the clauses) were the most stringent that he knew of." This from opposing counsel was a compliment indeed, and I was much complimented upon it. Mr. Pope greatly admired candour, and indeed I found myself that candour always told with the Committees. Littler loved Pope, and so did all the Parliamentary Bar, of which he was the acknowledged leader and the respected father. Littler said to me, " He is a wonderfully and variously gifted man, and had he chosen the stage as a profession would have been a David Garrick." I said, " What about his very substantial person?" for he was colossal in figure. " I had forgotten that," said Littler. Littler told me a good story of him which Pope, he said, was also fond of telling himself.

It was in the great man's biggest and busiest days. Influenza was rife. Mr. Pope was a bachelor, and his valet inconsiderately took the " flu." Mr.

Pope's nephew said the valet must go away till he fully recovered, or Mr. Pope would be sure to take it. " What shall I do?" said Mr. Pope, in dismay. " Oh, I'll get you a good man for the time," said the nephew; and so he did; a skilful, quiet, efficient, attentive man, whose usual duty it was to attend on a rich old gentleman, who resided, on account of a little mental derangement, in a certain pleasant private establishment. Mr. Pope had not been told, nor had he inquired, where the excellent valet, with whom he was well pleased, hailed from, nor had the valet asked any questions concerning Mr. Pope. Both seemed to have jumped to certain conclusions. After the valet had been there a week or more, one day, when *downstairs*, he said to the servants: " Tell me, what *is* it that is wrong with the master? He seems to me to be as sane as any of us! "

Balfour Browne, in his book *Forty Years at the Bar*, says, " He " (Mr. Pope) " had a broad equitable common sense, and never did anything mean or little." He was certainly an orator, and displayed in his speeches much dramatic power. His voice was fine, flexible and sonorous. In his later years he must often have wished his " too too solid flesh would melt," for it had become a heavy burden. He had to be wheeled from Committee Room to Committee Room in a perambulating chair, and was allowed to remain seated when addressing Committees. On the 12th of July Lord Spencer announced that " the Great Southern Amalgamation Bill may proceed subject to clauses as to running powers, etc." This meant that *our* Bill was gone, and that the Great Southern had gained possession of the Waterford and Limerick, Ennis, the line to Collooney and running powers to Sligo. Thus they had secured a monopoly in Munster and an effective competition with us in poor Connaught. It was hard lines for the Midland, but all was not yet lost. If only we could obtain running powers to Limerick and carry them back to Ireland, we should have secured some of the spoil. Another week was spent fighting over running powers, facilities, etc., and I was in the witness box again. Balfour Browne and Littler now conducted the warfare on either side, and keenly they fought. The Committee at one time seemed disposed to put us off with little or nothing. In the box I know I waxed warm—" the Great Southern to get all and we nothing—iniquitous," and then, " the public interest to count for nought—Oh, monstrous!" Well, in

the end, on the 19th of July, we were awarded full running powers to Limerick, and—the curtain fell!

The Act came into operation on the 2nd of January, 1901, the 1st being a Sunday. On the 8th we ran our first running power train, and the Joy Bells rang in Limerick. The Great Southern threatened us with an injunction because we began to exercise our powers before the terms of payment, etc., were fixed between us; but we laughed at threats and went gaily on our way. Limerick rewarded us by giving us their traffic.

In this last amalgamation year (1900) we were in the Committee Rooms also in connection with another case—the Kingscourt, Keady and Armagh Railway Bill; but, I will say no more about it than that we opposed the Bill for the purpose of obtaining proper protection of Midland interests.

The year 1900 brought a general Act of some importance called the *Railway Employment (Prevention of Accidents) Act.* It empowered the Board of Trade to make rules with the object of reducing or removing the dangers and risks incidental to certain operations connected with railway working, such as braking of wagons, propping and tow roping, lighting of stations, protection of point rods and signal wires, protection to permanent way men, and other similar matters. It also empowered the Board to employ persons for carrying the Act into effect.

Nineteen hundred, take it all in all, was a busy, interesting and delightful year. Though we did not succeed in acquiring the Waterford and Limerick Railway, which I may now say we scarcely expected, for *compulsory* railway amalgamation was then unheard of, yet our *bold course* was regarded with considerable success (as boldness often is) and the running powers we had won were pecuniarily valuable as well as strategically important. Sir Theodore Martin, our Parliamentary Agent, and who had taken the keenest interest in the contest, wrote me: "After all I do not much regret the issue of the fight the Midland have had. To have got running powers to Limerick, and to have to give nothing for them is a substantial triumph." So also thought my Chairman and Directors, for on the 25th of July they passed the following Board minute:—

> "Resolved unanimously, that having regard to the great exertions of Mr. Tatlow in connection with the several Bills before Parliament,

and the Directors being of opinion that the favourable terms obtained by this Company were due to the great care and attention given by him, they have unanimously decided to raise Mr. Tatlow's salary £200 a year on and from the 1st inst."

Not a very great amount in these extravagant days, perhaps, but in Ireland, nineteen years ago, it was thought quite a big thing; and it had the additional charm of being altogether unexpected by its grateful recipient.

Sir Theodore Martin, though 84 years of age, was full of intellectual and physical vigour. He was a sound adviser, and enthusiastic in the amalgamation business. Poet, biographer and translator, he kept up his intellectuality till the last, and the end of his interesting life did not come until he reached his 94th year. In 1905 he published a translation of Leopardi's poems. Between us arose a much greater intimacy than the ordinary intimacy of business, and his friendship, through a long series of years, I enjoyed and highly valued.

Between the two periods of the Amalgamation control I sandwiched a delightful holiday, and in the autumn of 1899, after the conclusion of the great Ballinasloe Fair, travelled east as far as Constantinople. Were this a book of travel (which it is not) a chapter might be devoted to that trip. But the cobbler must stick to his last, though a word or two may, perhaps, be allowed on the subject, if only by way of variety.

My companions on this interesting tour were my good friends F. K. and H. H. We went by sea from Southampton to Genoa, where we stayed two days to enjoy the sunshine and colour; its steep, picturesque and narrow streets, and its beautiful old palaces. Then we visited Milan and Venice. At Venice we spent several days, charmed with its beauty. From Trieste we took an Austrian Lloyd steamer, the *Espero*, to Constantinople. At Patras we left the steamer to rejoin it at Piræus, wending our way by rail along the Gulf of Corinth to Athens, in which classical city we stayed the night. Messrs. Gaze and Sons had ordered their guide (or dragoman as he was called) to meet us and devote himself to our service. The next morning at 7 o'clock, he called for us at our hotel, and from that hour till noon, under his guidance, we visited the temples and monuments of ancient Athens, and

To face page 162.

Theodore Martin 1899

inspected the modern city also. In the afternoon we drove or rather ploughed our way from Athens to Piræus (five miles) along the worst road I ever traversed, not excepting the streets of Constantinople. We found the harbour gay with music, flags and bunting, in honour of a great Russian Admiral who was leaving his ship to journey by ours to Constantinople. His officers bade him respectful farewells on the deck of our steamer, and he ceremoniously kissed them each and all.

On the twenty-second day after leaving home, at six o'clock in the morning, we were aroused in our berths and informed that we had arrived at Constantinople. The morning, unfortunately, was dull, and our first view of the Ottoman city, therefore, a little obscured. All the same, it was a great sight, with its minarets and towers, its Golden Horn and crowded quays. Our dragoman kept at bay all the clamouring crowd of porters, guides and nondescripts of all colours and races that besieged us. It was 8.30 a.m. when we landed, but 3.30 p.m. by Turkish time. The Moslem day is from sunset to sunset, and sunset is always reckoned 12 o'clock; an awkward arrangement which the reforming "Young Turk" perhaps has since altered. The week we spent in Constantinople was all too short. We stayed at the Pera Palace Hotel, and the first night after dinner, in our innocence, strolled out. All was dark and dismal; no one in the streets. We went as far as the quays, strolled back and on the way called at a small café, the only inmate of which was a dwarf, as remarkable looking as Velasquez's *Sebastian de Morra*. The hall porter at our hotel was waiting our return with anxiety. "It was not safe to be out at night," he said; "we had gold watches on us and money in our purses, and knives were sharp." Murray's guide book, we afterwards found, gave similar warning, without mentioning knives. Sir Nicholas O'Connor was our Ambassador in Constantinople. He was an Irishman from County Mayo, and I had a letter of introduction to him from my friend Sir George Morris. Sir Nicholas invited me to lunch at Therapia, where the Embassy was in residence in its summer quarters. He was exceedingly kind and facilitated our sightseeing in the great city during our stay. We witnessed the Selamlik ceremony of the Sultan's weekly visit for prayers to the Mosque Hamedieh Jami, which stands adjacent to the grounds of Yildiz Kiosk. It was worth seeing. There

was a great gathering of military in splendid uniforms and glittering decorations. Seven handsome carriages contained his principal wives, or ladies of the harem (wives we were told), and several of the Sultan's sons (mere youths) were there, beautifully apparelled. We caught glimpses of the ladies through their carriage windows, and being women (though veiled) I should be surprised if they, on their part, did not get glimpses of us. There were eunuchs too, black frock-coated—and the chief eunuch, an important personage who ranks very high. Then came the Sultan (Abdul Hamid) himself in an open carriage, closely surrounded and guarded by officers. He was an elderly, careworn, bearded, sallow, melancholy looking man, whose features seemed incapable of a smile. He entered the Mosque alone; his wives remaining seated in their carriages outside. In the room in which we sat at an open window to view the ceremony we were regaled with the Sultan's coffee and cigarettes.

The streets and bazaars of Constantinople were absorbingly interesting. The various nationalities that everywhere met the eye; the flowing eastern costumes, the picturesque water carriers, the public letter writers patiently seated at street corners and occupied with their clients, the babel of voices, and yet an Oriental indolence pervading all, crowds but no hurry; the sonorous and musical sound of the Muezzin call to prayers from the minarets —*all* was new and strange; delightful too, if you except the dogs that beset the streets and over which, as they lay about, we stumbled at every step. They are now a thing of the past. Poor brutes, they deserved a better fate than the cruel method of extinction which Turkish rule administered.

Of course we visited Stamboul's greatest Mosque, S. Sophia. Many other Mosques we saw, but none that approached the majesty of this. One, the Church of the Monastery of the Chora, famous for its beautiful mosaics, we did not see, although the German Emperor had driven specially to it on his visit in 1898 to the Sultan. The only good road Constantinople seemed to possess was this road to the church, which lies outside the city, and this road, we were told, was constructed for the convenience of His Imperial Majesty.

One day, on the bridge that spans the Golden Horn, we passed the Grand Vizier in his carriage. It was the day on which we crossed the

Bosphorus by steamer to visit Scutari on the Asiatic shore. Scutari commands a splendid view of the city, the Golden Horn, and the Bosphorus in its winding beauty, right away to the Black Sea. What a city some day will Constantinople be! The grandest perhaps on earth. In Scutari we heard the Howling Dervishes at their devotions, and the following day, in Constantinople, witnessed a *performance* shall I call it? of the Dancing Dervishes in their whirling, circling, toe-revolving exercise. The object of both is said to be to produce the ecstatic state in which the soul enters the world of dreams and becomes one with God. There is no question as to the ecstatic, nay frenzied state many of them attained.

Our last day was the eve of the Ramadan Fast. At eight o'clock that night we left by train to journey homeward overland, for time demanded that we should go back much quicker than we came.

We broke our journey for two days at Buda-Pesth, and looked on the Danube; at Vienna we stayed a little longer, and found that gay city hard to leave. We drove and rode in the Prater, and horseback exercise in such a place was, I need not say, delightful. We stopped at Frankfort, enjoyed its opera and other things, then, *via* Ostend, wended our way to London.

CHAPTER XXVI

A Congress at Paris, the Progress of Irish Lines. Egypt and the Nile

"Will you undertake to report on the subject of Light Railways for the International Railway Congress at Paris?" This question was put to me in the year 1899, and although I was busy enough, without shouldering additional work, I at once said "Yes," and this was how I came to spend part of my 1900 annual holiday in the beautiful but crowded capital of France. Crowded it was almost to suffocation, for 1900 was the Great Exhibition year, and all the world and his wife were there. The Railway Congress took place in September. The business part of the proceedings came first, and I did not stay for the festivities. When my Report was made and discussed (a reporter was not allowed to read his paper, but was required to speak from notes), I made, with three railway friends from Dublin, tracks for Switzerland. It had been a strenuous year and mountain air and exercise were needed to restore one's physical strength and jaded faculties.

"*Means of developing light railways. What are the best means of encouraging the building of light railways?*" This was the text for my paper, as sent to me by the Congress, and my Report, I was told, should be confined to the United Kingdom, Mr. W. M. Acworth having undertaken a report on the subject for other countries.

In my Report I first disposed of Ireland, concerning which and its light railways I have already written with some fulness in these pages; and my

readers, I am sure, will not be surprised to hear that, as regards that country I answered the question remitted to me by saying that the only practical means I could see of further encouraging the construction of light railways in Ireland was by the wise expenditure of additional Government Grants, while as regards England, I pointed out that she had for long preferred to dispense with light railways, that, as forcibly expressed in *The Times*, she alone of civilised countries had but one standard for her railways, that is " the best that money could buy "; that times had changed, and in 1894 and 1895 much discussion and investigation on the subject had taken place, brought about chiefly, I thought, by depression in agriculture; that the energy which France, Germany, Sweden, Belgium and Italy had expended on their light railway systems, especially in agricultural and rural districts, had helped to further concentrate public opinion on the question; that a conference had been held at the Board of Trade and a Committee appointed to investigate the subject; that this Committee, after various sittings, had reported in favour of legislation, and that the result had been that the *Light Railway Act* of 1896 had come into being. My paper also dealt with this Act, explaining its scope, its limitations and what its effect had been during the comparatively short time (only four years) it had been in force; and my conclusion was that in Great Britain no further facilities were at that time required for encouraging the building of light railways, the best policy in my judgment being, to give the Act a fair trial, as time only could show to what extent the railways to be made in virtue of its provisions would fulfil the objects for which it had been passed.

Mr. Acworth did not tackle the question as affecting other countries. He reported that he had no special knowledge which would entitle him to say how light railway enterprise could best be developed in countries other than his own, and that as my Report " sufficiently set out the present position of affairs in reference to light railways in the United Kingdom," he thought the most useful contribution he could offer to the discussion of the question would be " a short criticism of the working, both from a legal or administrative and also from a practical point of view, of our English Act of 1896."

The Act of 1896 was one of considerable importance to British Railways and, therefore, merits a few words. It established three Commissioners who

were empowered to make Orders authorising the construction of Light Railways, including powers for the compulsory acquisition of land; authorised the granting of Government loans and, under special circumstances, free grants of money. The Board of Trade might require any project brought forward under the Act to be submitted to Parliament, if they considered its magnitude, or the effect it might have on any existing railway, demanded such a course. The Act simplified and cheapened the process for the acquisition of land, and ordained that in fixing the price the consequent betterment of other lands held by the same owner should be taken into account. It imparted considerable power to dispense with certain expensive conditions and regulations in working railways constructed under its authority. Though it was intended primarily to benefit agriculture, it was capable of an interpretation wide enough to include all kinds of tramways, and it has been extensively used for that purpose, sometimes, I fear, to the detriment of existing railways.

According to an article in the Jubilee (1914) number of the *Railway News*, by Mr. Welby Everard, up to the end of the year 1912 (since the outbreak of the war figures are not obtainable) a total of 645 applications (including 111 applications for amending Orders) were made to the Commissioners, the total mileage represented being 4,861 miles. Of these applications 418 were passed, comprising 2,115 miles, of which, 1,415 miles were in class A, *i.e.*, light railways to be constructed on land acquired or "cross-country" lines, that is to say, lines which legitimately fulfilled the purposes of the Act. But, up to October, 1913, only 45 of these lines, with a total length of 441 miles, had been constructed and opened for traffic. The number of applications to the Commissioners seemed to show a considerable demand for greater facilities for transit in rural districts, but capital apparently was slow to respond to that demand. Perhaps it will be different now, in these days of change and reconstruction. The Government is pledged to tackle the whole question of Transport, and Light Railways will, of course, not be overlooked, though Motor Traction will run them a close race.

For ten years I had now been manager of the Midland Great Western Railway, and busy and interesting years they were. In that period Irish railways, considering that the population of the country was diminishing, had

made remarkable progress, and effected astonishing improvements. Whilst the population of England during the decade had *increased* by 9.13 per cent., and Scotland by 4.69, that of Ireland had *decreased* by 4.29 per cent.! Yet, notwithstanding this, the railway traffic in Ireland, measured by receipts, had increased by 22 per cent., against England 31 and Scotland 36. In the number of passengers carried the increase in Ireland was 29 per cent. In the same period the increase in the number of engines and vehicles in Ireland was 22, in England 30, and Scotland 33 per cent., whilst the number of train miles run (which is the real measure of the usefulness of railways to the public) had advanced 27 per cent. in Ireland, compared with 28 in England, and 30 in Scotland.

These figures indicate what Irish railways had accomplished in the decade ending with December, 1900, and betoken, I venture to affirm, a keen spirit of enterprise. These ten years had witnessed the introduction of breakfast and dining cars on the trains, of parlour cars, long bogie corridor carriages, the lighting of carriages by electricity, the building of railway hotels in tourist districts, the establishment of numerous coach and steamboat tours, the quickening of tourist traffic generally, the adoption of larger locomotives of greatly increased power, the acceleration of the train service, the laying of heavier and smoother permanent way, and a widespread extension of cheap fares—tourist, excursion, week-end, etc. It was a period of great activity and progress in the Irish railway world, with which I was proud and happy to be intimately connected. But what a return for all this effort and enterprise the Irish railway companies received—£3 17s. 10d. per cent. on the whole capital expended, plus a liberal amount of abuse from the Press and politicians, neither of whom ever paused to consider what Ireland owed to her railways, which, perhaps, all things considered, was the best conducted business in the country. It, however, became the vogue to decry Irish lines as inefficient and extortionate, and a fashion once started, however ridiculous, never lacks supporters. The public, like sheep, are easily led. In England the average return on capital expended was £4 0s. 5d., and in Scotland £4 2s. 2d.

In the spring of 1901, Mr. W. H. Mills, the Engineer of the Great Northern Railway of Ireland, and I were entrusted by the Board of Works

with an investigation into the circumstances of the Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway in regard to a proposed Government loan to enable the Company to discharge its liabilities and complete an extension of its railway to Crosshaven. It was an interesting inquiry, comprising a broken contract, the cost of completing unfinished works, the financial prospects of the line when such works were completed, and other cognate matters. A Bill in Parliament promoted by the Railway Company in the following year became necessary in connection with the loan, which after our Report the Government granted, and I had to give evidence in regard to it. In the same session I appeared also before two other Parliamentary Committees, so again I had a busy time outside the ordinary domestic duties pertaining to railway management.

On the first day of November, 1902, my good friend Walter Bailey and I started on a visit to Egypt. It, like Constantinople and Spain and Portugal, occupied more than the usual month's vacation, but as these extra long excursions were taken only every two or three years, and as it was never my habit to nibble at holidays by indulging in odd days or week-ends, my conscience was clear, especially as my Chairman and Directors cordially approved of my seeing a bit of the world, and readily granted the necessary leave of absence. As for Bailey, he always declared this Egyptian tour was the holiday of his life. To continue, we arrived in Cairo, *via* Trieste and Alexandria, on the 10th. There we were met by Mr. Harrison, the general manager of Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son, and their principal dragoman, *Selim*, whom he placed during our stay in Cairo at our disposal. *Selim* was a Syrian and the prince of dragomans; a handsome man, of Oriental dignity and gravity, arrayed in wonderful robes, which by contrast with our Occidental attire made Bailey and me feel drab and commonplace. At Cairo we stayed for eight days at Shepheard's Hotel, and under *Selim's* guidance made good use of our time. On the ninth day we began a delightful journey up the Nile. Mr. Frank Cook had insisted upon our being the guests of his firm on their tourist steamer *Amasis*.

My relations with Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son go back for many years, and with the Midland of England, my *Alma Mater*, the firm is, perhaps, more closely associated than with any other railway. It was on the Midland

system that, in 1841, its business began. In that year the founder of the firm, Mr. Thomas Cook, arranged with the Midland the first public excursion train on record. It ran from Leicester to Loughborough and back at a fare of one shilling, and carried 570 passengers. This was the first small beginning of that great tourist business which now encircles the habitable globe. Mr. Thomas Cook was a Derbyshire man and was born in 1808. My father knew him well, often talked to me about him, and told me stories of the excursion and tourist trade in its early days. But I am digressing, and must return to Old Father Nile, who was in great flood. We saw him at his best. His banks were teeming with happy dusky figures and the smiling irrigated land was bright with fertility. Our journey to Assouan occupied eleven days, a leisurely progress averaging about two and a-half miles an hour. During the night we never steamed, the *Amasis* lying up while we enjoyed quiet rest in the quietest of lands. Of course we visited all the famous temples and tombs, ruins and monuments, of ancient Egypt; and had many camel and donkey rides on the desert sands before reaching the first cataract. At Luxor, where we stayed for five days, we were pleasantly surprised at seeing Mr. Harrison and Mr. Warren Gillman come on board. The latter was Secretary of Messrs. Cook and Son's Egyptian business, and has, I believe, since risen higher in the service of the firm.

The great Dam at Assouan was just completed and we traversed its entire length on a trolley propelled by natives. Assouan detained us for four days; then, time being important, we travelled back to Cairo by railway. Three more interesting days were passed in the Babylonian city, then homewards we went by the quickest route attainable.

Whilst in Cairo and on our journey up the Nile, Bailey and I wrote, jointly, a series of seven articles on "Egypt and its Railways." These appeared in the *Railway News* in seven successive weeks during December and January.

Our last hours in the land of the Pharaohs were filled with regret at having to leave it so soon. Said Bailey: "Cannot you, before we go, write a verse of Farewell?" So I composed the following:—

Egypt, farewell, and farewell Father Nile,
Impenetrable Sphinx, eternal pile
Of broad-based pyramid, and spacious hypostyle!

Farewell Osiris, Anubis and Set,
Horus and Ra, and gentle Meskenhet,
Ye sacred gods of old, O must we leave you yet?

The mighty works of Ramesis the Great,
Memphis, Karnak and Thebes asseverate
The pomp and glory, Egypt, of your ancient state.

Bright cloudless land! Your skies of heavenly blue
Bend o'er your fellaheen the whole day through;
Night scarce diminishes their sweet celestial hue.

Realm of enchantment, break your mystic spell,
Land of the lotus, smiling land farewell!
For ever it may be, what oracle can tell?

CHAPTER XXVII

King Edward, a Change of Chairmen, and more Railway Legislation

The memorable visit to Ireland of His Majesty King Edward, in the summer of 1903, which embraced all parts of the country, furnished I think no incident so unique as his reception in Connemara. On the morning of the 30th July the Royal Yacht anchored off Leenane, in Killery Bay, and His Majesty landed in Connaught. He was accompanied by Queen Alexandra and Princess Victoria. This was the first time, I believe, that the people west of the Shannon had seen their King, and whatever their politics, or aspirations were, he was certainly received with every manifestation of sincere good will. His genial personality and ingratiating *bonhomie*, his humanity, and his sportsmanlike characteristics, appealed at once to Irish instincts, and Connaught was as enthusiastic in its welcome as the rest of Ireland. The Royal party motored from Leenane to Recess, where they lunched at the Company's hotel, and where, of course, the Chairman, directors and chief officers of the railway, as well as local magnates, were assembled to assist in the welcome. On nearing Recess a surprise awaited the King. He was met by the " Connemara Cavalry," which escorted the Royal Party to the hotel and acted as bodyguard. Mr. John O'Loughlin, of Cashel, had organised this new and unexpected addition to His Majesty's Forces. It consisted of about 100 farmers, farmer's sons and labourers, of all ages from 18 to 80, mounted (mostly bareback) on hardy Connemara ponies. " Buffalo Bill " hats, decor-

ated with the Royal colours or with green ribbon streamers, distinguished them from others. It was a striking scene, unexpected, novel, unique; but quite in harmony with the surroundings and the wild and romantic scenery of Connemara and the Killeries. The King plainly showed his hearty appreciation. After lunch their Majesties visited the marble quarries, situated some three miles distant, and reached by a rough and rocky precipitous mountain road, for which motor cars were entirely unsuited. For this journey the marble quarry people had ordered a carriage and horses from Dublin, but which, by some unfortunate occurrence, had not turned up. Though the only carriage available in the neighbourhood was ill-suited for royalty, the King and Queen, good naturedly, made little of that. They were too delighted with the unmistakable warmth of their welcome to mind such a trifle. Again the " Cavalry " were in attendance and escorted the party to the quarries and back.

The Royal visit to Ireland, on the whole, was an unqualified success, and there were many who hoped and believed that the King's good will towards the country and its people, and his remarkable gifts as a peacemaker, would in some way help to a solution of the Irish question; but, alas! that question is with us still, and when and how it will be solved no man can tell. For myself, I am one of those who indulge in *hope*, remembering that Time, in his healing course, has a way of adjusting human misunderstandings and of bringing about the seemingly impossible.

It was in this year (1903) that I first met Charles Dent, the present General Manager of the Great Northern Railway of England. He had been appointed General Manager of the Great Southern and Western Railway in succession to R. G. Colhoun. Dent and I often met. We found we could do good work for our respective companies by reducing wasteful competition and adopting methods of friendly working. In this we were very successful. A man of few words, disdaining all unnecessary formalities, but getting quickly at the heart and essence of things, it was always a pleasure to do business with him.

In this year also I enjoyed some variety by way of an inquiry which I made for the Board of Works, concerning certain proposed light railway extensions, called the Ulster and Connaught, and which involved the ticklish task of estimating probable traffic receipts and working expenses—a task

for which the gift of prophecy almost is needed. To determine, in this uncertain world, the future of a railway in embryo might puzzle the wisest; but, with the confidence of the expert, I faced the problem and, I hope, arrived at conclusions which were at least within a mile of the mark.

In 1904 that fine old railway veteran, Sir Ralph Cusack, resigned his position of Chairman of the Midland and was succeeded by the Honourable Richard Nugent, youngest son of the ninth Earl of Westmeath; Major H. C. Cusack, Sir Ralph's nephew and son-in-law, becoming Deputy Chairman—the first (excepting for a few brief months in 1903 when Mr. Nugent occupied the position) the Midland ever had. With Sir Ralph's vacation of the chair, autocratic rule on the Midland, which year by year, had steadily been growing less, disappeared entirely and for ever. Well, Sir Ralph in his long period of office had served the Midland faithfully, with a single eye to its interests, and good wishes followed him in his retirement. Mr. Nugent was a small man, that is physically, but intellectually was well endowed. He had scholarly tastes and business ability in pretty equal parts. Movement and activity he loved, and, as he often told me, preferred a holiday in Manchester or Birmingham to the Riviera or Italian Lakes. He liked to be occupied, was fond of details, and possessed a lively curiosity. Sometimes he was thought, as a chairman, to err in the direction of too rigid economy, but on a railway such as the Midland, and in a country such as Ireland, economy was and is an excellent thing, and if he erred, it was on the right side. Truth, candour, courage and enthusiasm marked his character in a high degree. Fearless in speech, the art of dissimulation he never learned. I shall not readily forget a speech he once made at the Railway Companies' Association in London. It was on an occasion of great importance, when all the principal companies of the United Kingdom were present. It was altogether unpremeditated, provoked by other speeches with which he disagreed, and its directness and courage—for it was a bold and frank expression of honest conviction, such as tells in any assembly—created some stir and considerable comment. Of plain homely mother-wit he had an uncommon share, and his mind was stored with quotations which came out in his talk with wonderful ease and aptness. A shrewd observer, his comments (always good-natured if critical) on his fellow men were worth listening to.

Our almost daily intercourse was intimate and frank. Sometimes we wandered into the pleasant fields of poetry and literature, but never to the neglect of business. He had an advantage that I greatly envied; a splendid memory; could repeat verse after verse, stanza upon stanza, whole cantos almost, from his favourite poet, Byron. It was at the half-yearly meetings of shareholders (they were held half-yearly in his day) that he specially shone, not in his address to them (for that he *would* persist in reading) but in the after proceedings when the heckling began. This, during his chairmanship, was often severe enough, for owing to unavoidably increased expenditure, dividends were diminishing and shareholders, in consequence, were in anything but complacent mood. Question time always put him on his mettle. Then his mother-wit came out, his lively humour and practical common sense—all unstudied and natural. The effect was striking. Rarely did he fail in disarming criticism, producing harmony, and sending away dissentients in good temper, though some of them, I know, sometimes afterwards wondered how it came about that they had been so easily placated.

From 1903 to 1906 several Acts of Parliament affecting railways generally came into force, four of which were of sufficient importance to merit attention. The first, the *Railways (Electric Power) Act*, 1903, was a measure to facilitate the introduction and use of electrical power on railways, and invested the Board of Trade with authority to make Orders for that purpose, which were to have the same effect as if enacted by Parliament.

The second, the *Railway Fires Act*, 1905, was an Act to give compensation for damage by fires caused by sparks or cinders from railway engines, and increased the liability of railway companies. It *inter alia*, enacted that the fact that the offending engine was used under statutory powers should not affect liability in any action for damage.

Next came the *Trades Disputes Act*, 1906, a short measure of five clauses, but none the less of great importance; a democratic law with a vengeance! It is one of the four Acts which A. A. Baumann, in his recent book, describes as being " in themselves a revolution," and of this particular Act he says it " placed the Trade Unions beyond the reach of the laws of contract and of tort." It also legalised peaceful picketing, that particular form of persuasion with which a democratic age has become only too familiar.

Lastly, the *Workmen's Compensation Act*, of 1906, an Act to consolidate and amend the law with respect to compensation to workmen for injuries suffered in the course of their employment, is on the whole a beneficial and useful measure, to which we have grown accustomed.

In these years I had other holiday trips abroad; some with my family to France and Switzerland, and two with my friend, John Kilkelly. One of these two was to Denmark and Germany; the other to Monte Carlo and the Riviera. In Germany, at Altona, we saw the Kaiser " in shining armour," fresh from the autumnal review of his troops, though indeed I should scarcely say *fresh*, for he looked tired and pale, altogether different to the stern bronzed warrior depicted in his authorised photographic presentments which confronted us at every turn. Kilkelly was a busy, but never seemed an overworked man, due I suppose to some constitutional quality he enjoyed. Added to a good professional business of his own, he was Solicitor to the Midland, Crown Solicitor for County Armagh, Solicitor to the Galway County Council, and, in *his leisure hours*, farmed successfully some seven or eight hundred acres. He had a fine portly presence, and though modesty itself, could not help looking as if he were *somebody*, like the stranger in London, accosted by Theodore Hook in the Strand, who was of such imposing appearance that the wit stopped him and said: " I beg your pardon, sir, but may I ask, are you anybody in particular?"

At Monte Carlo we both lost money but revelled in abundant sunshine, and contemplated phases of humanity that to us were new and strange. Soon we grew tired of the gaming table and its glittering surroundings, bade it adieu, and explored other parts of the Riviera, moving at our ease from scene to scene and from place to place.

Kilkelly was an excellent travelling companion, readily pleased, and taking things as they came with easy philosophy. But never more shall we travel together, at home or abroad. A year ago, at the age of 82, he passed from among us on the last long journey which we all must take.

Requiescat in pace!

CHAPTER XXVIII

Vice-Regal Commission on Irish Railways, 1906–1910, and the Future of Railways

In previous pages I have spoken of the manner in which the railways of Ireland had long been abused. This abuse, as the years went on, instead of diminishing grew in strength if not in grace. The Companies were strangling the country, stifling industry, thwarting enterprise; were extortionate, grasping, greedy, inefficient. These were the things that were said of them, and this in face of what the railways were accomplishing, of which I have previously spoken. Politics were largely at the bottom of it all, I am sure, and certain newspapers joined in the noisy chorus. At length the House of Commons, during the Session of 1905, rewarded the agitators by adopting the following resolution:—

> "*That in the opinion of this House, excessive railway rates and defective transit facilities, generally, constitute a serious bar to the advancement of Ireland and should receive immediate attention from the Government with a view to providing a remedy therefor.*"

This Resolution bore fruit, for in the ensuing year (1906), in the month of July, a Vice-Regal Commission was appointed to inquire into the subject, and the Terms of Reference to the Commission included these words:—

" What causes have retarded the expansion of traffic upon the Irish lines and their full utilization for the development of the agricultural and industrial resources of the country; and, generally, by what methods the economical, efficient, and harmonious working of the Irish Railways can best be secured."

As the newspapers said, the Irish Railway Companies were put upon their trial. As soon as the Commission was appointed the Companies (19 in number) assembled at the Railway Clearing House in Dublin to discuss the situation and decide upon a course of action. Unanimously it was resolved to act together and to make a common defence. A Committee, consisting of the Chairman and General Managers of the seven principal companies, was appointed and invested with full power to act in the interest of all, as they should find desirable. The Right Honourable Sir William (then Sir William) Goulding, Baronet, Chairman of the Great Southern and Western Railway, was appointed Chairman of the Committee. I was appointed its Secretary, and Mr. Croker Barrington its Solicitor. It was further decided that one general case for the associated railways should be prepared and presented to the Commission by one person, who should also (under the direction of the Committee) have charge of all proceedings connected with the Inquiry. I, to my delight, was unanimously selected as that person, and to enable me to do the work properly, I was allowed to select three assistants. My choice fell upon G. E. Smyth, John Quirey, and Joseph Ingram, and I could not have chosen better. We were allotted an office in the Railway Clearing House; my assistants gave their whole time to the work, and I gravitated between Broadstone and Kildare Street, for of course I had to look after the Midland Great Western as well as the Commission business. That I could not, like Sir Boyle Roche's bird, be in two places at once, was my greatest disappointment. I may record here that each of my assistants has since, to borrow an Americanism, " made good." Smyth is now Traffic Manager of the Great Southern and Western Railway ; Quirey is Chief Accountant of the Midland Railway of England, and Ingram became Secretary of the Irish Clearing House, from which he has been recently promoted to an important position under the Ministry of Transport (Ireland).

The way in which the seven Companies worked together, and the success they attained was, I think, something to be proud of. Sir William Goulding was an excellent Chairman. There was just one little rift in the lute. One of the seven Companies showed a disposition, at times, to play off its own bat, but this was, after all, only a small matter, and the general harmony, cohesion and unanimity that prevailed were admirable, and unquestionably productive of good. We had as Counsel, to guide and assist the Committee, and to represent the Companies before the tribunal, Mr. Balfour Browne, K.C.; Mr. Jas. Campbell, K.C. (now the Rt. Hon. Sir James Campbell, Baronet, Lord Chancellor of Ireland); Mr. T. M. Healy, K.C.; Mr. Vesey Knox, K.C.; and Mr. G. Fitzgibbon. They served us well, and were all required. During the proceedings, prolonged as they were, each could not of course always appear, and it was important to have Counsel invariably at hand.

Sir Charles Scotter was appointed Chairman of the Commission. He was Chairman of the London and South Western Railway; had risen from the ranks in the railway service; had been a general manager, and was unquestionably a man of great ability; but he was handicapped by his age, which even then exceeded the Psalmist's allotted span. His health moreover was not good, and in less than six months after the completion of the work of the Commission, he departed this life at the age of 75.

Mr. George Shanahan, Assistant Secretary of the Board of Works, was the capable Secretary of the Commission. He had the advantage of being a railwayman. From the service of the Great Northern Railway, Robertson took him with him to the Board of Works in the year 1896.

Before the Commission began its public sittings it issued and freely circulated a printed paper entitled "*Draft Heads of Evidence for Traders, Industrial Associations, Commercial and Public Bodies, etc.*" This paper invited complaints under various set headings and concluded with these words:—

> "Whether there is any other question that might be usefully considered in determining *the causes that have retarded the expansion of*

traffic upon the Irish lines, and their full utilization for the development of the agricultural and industrial resources of the country."

The italics are mine. We, rightly or wrongly, looked upon this paragraph as *assuming* the case against the Companies to have some foundation in fact and likely to bias neutral opinion against us, and when (after the hearing was concluded) three of the seven Commissioners reported that the evidence " led them to doubt whether expansion of traffic had been retarded," we felt that our view was not without justification. But I am anticipating the findings of the Commission, and perhaps, after all, the peculiar Terms of the Reference largely dictated the course of procedure which the Commission adopted.

The first public sitting was held in Dublin on the 12th of October, 1906, and the last in the same city on the 29th of January, 1909. There were 95 public sittings in all; and 293 witnesses were examined, 29 of whom appeared on behalf of the Railway Companies. The Reports of the Commissioners (for there were two—a Majority and a Minority Report) did not appear till the 4th of July, 1910, so from the time of its appointment until the conclusion of its work the Commission covered a period of four years, all but fourteen days.

During the course of this Inquiry I passed through a crisis in my life. From more than a year before the Commission was appointed I had been in most indifferent health, the cause of which doctors both in Dublin and in London were unable to discover. As time went on I became worse. Recurring attacks of intense internal pain and constant loss of sleep worked havoc with my strength; but I held on grimly to my work, and few there were who knew how I suffered. One day, indeed, at the close of a sitting of the Commission, Sir John (then Mr.) Aspinall came over to where I sat, and said: " How ill you have looked all day, Tatlow; what is wrong?" By the time March, 1907, came round, finding I could go on no longer, I went to London and saw three medical men, one of whom was the eminent surgeon, Sir Mayo (then Mr.) Robson. He, happily, discovered the cause of my trouble, and forthwith operated upon me. It was a severe and prolonged operation,

but saved my life and re-established my health. Not until late in July was I able to resume work—an enforced absence from duty of four long months. In this absence my three assistants carried on the Commission work with great efficiency. It was a trying experience that I passed through, but from it I gathered some knowledge of what a man can endure and still perform his daily task, and what the value of true and sympathetic friendship means to one in a time of suffering. It was during this illness that my friend, F. K. shewed what a true friend he was. He, and my dear kinsman Harry, devoted themselves to me, especially during my convalescence, giving up their time ungrudgingly and accompanying me to the Mediterranean and elsewhere.

The presentation of the Railway case and the rebutting evidence did not begin till all the public witnesses had been heard. My evidence, on behalf of the associated companies, occupied five days. Other railway managers followed with evidence specially affecting their own railways, and one Chairman (Mr. F. W. Pim, Dublin and South-Eastern Railway) also appeared in the witness box. We had also as a witness Mr. E. A. Pratt, the well-known journalist and author of works on railways and commercial subjects, who gave evidence for us regarding Continental railway rates and conditions of transit abroad, in answer to evidence which had been given on the subject by an official of the Department of Agriculture. An extraordinary amount of importance had been attached to Continental railway rates as compared with rates in Ireland, and the Department had sent their representative abroad to gather all the information he could. He returned, armed with figures, and submitted lengthy evidence and numerous tables. A great outcry had been made for years in the Press and on the platform that rates in Ireland were exorbitant compared with Continental rates; and now, it was thought, this will be brought home to the Irish Companies. Mr. Pratt was well informed, having investigated the subject thoroughly in various countries, and written and published books and articles thereon. Between us we were able to show the unfairness of the comparisons, the dissimilarity of the circumstances of each country, and the varied conditions and nature of the services rendered in each, and the Commissioners in the Majority

Report confessed that after a full consideration of the evidence, they did not think any useful purpose would be served by attempting to make particular and detailed comparisons between Continental and Irish rates.

I could write much that would be interesting about the proceedings and the evidence given against and for the Companies; how reckless were many of the charges brought against them, how easily they were disproved; how subtle and disingenuous other charges were and what skill was required to refute them; how some of the witnesses were up in the clouds and had to be brought down to common earth; how conclusively the Companies proved that the railways had done their best to encourage and help every industry and that their efforts had not been unsuccessful; but I will resist the temptation, and proceed to the Reports which the Commissioners presented to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant. As I have said, there were two reports, one signed by four, the other by three Commissioners. The Majority Report bore the signatures of the Chairman, the Rt. Hon. Lord Pirrie, Colonel (now Sir) Hutcheson Poë, and Mr. Thomas Sexton, while the Minority Report was signed by Sir Herbert Jekyll, Mr. W. M. Acworth, and Mr. (now Sir) John Aspinall. The first-mentioned Report was not so favourable to the railways as the other, yet the worst thing it said of the Companies was that they were commercial bodies conducted on commercial principles and ran the railways for profit, and it admitted that Irish railway managers neglected few opportunities for developing traffic. In a sort of way it apologised for the evidence-seeking printed papers to which I have already referred, and admitted that had the Commissioners been in possession of the statistics of trade and industry published in 1906 by the Department of Agriculture (which semed to have surprised them by the facts and figures they contained of Ireland's progress) these circulars might have been framed differently. The Report also said that the complaints the Commissioners received would have been fewer in number if some of the public witnesses had been better informed and had taken pains to verify their statements. The Commissioners further reported that they were satisfied that it was impracticable for the Railway Companies, as commercial undertakings, to make such reduction in rates as was desired, and, " as the economic condition of the country

required," but it was not mentioned that no inquiry had been made as to the economic condition alluded to. In regard to this question of economic condition the Minority Report took a more modest view. It expressed the opinion that regarding the causes which had retarded the expansion of traffic upon the Irish lines, " A complete answer would involve an inquiry ranging over the whole field of agriculture and industry in all its aspects," and that this the Commissioners had not made. It also added that the statistics of Irish trade which had been published by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction since the commencement of the Inquiry led them (the Minority Commissioners) to doubt whether the expansion of traffic *had* been retarded.

To return to the Majority Report. The Commissioners who signed it were of opinion that Ireland needed special treatment in regard to her railways and that public acquisition (not State acquisition) and public control of a unified railway system was the consummation to be desired. In their view, if only this were accomplished blessings innumerable would ensue and all complaints would for ever cease. As to the way in which this unification and public control were to be carried out, they recommended that an Irish Authority should be instituted to acquire the Irish Railways and work them as a single system, that this Authority should be a railway Board of twenty Directors, four nominated and sixteen elected; that the general terms of purchase be those prescribed by the Regulation of Railways Act of 1844; that the financial medium be a Railway Stock; and that such Stock be charged upon (1) The Consolidated Fund; (2) the net revenues of the unified railway system; (3) an annual grant from the Imperial Exchequer; and (4) a general rate to be struck by the Irish Railway Authority if and when required.

The Commissioners who signed the Minority Report said the evidence, as a whole, had not produced the same general effect upon their minds as upon the minds of their colleagues, and they were inclined to attach less importance than their colleagues did to the evidence given against the Irish Railway Companies, and more importance to the evidence given in their favour. In their opinion the result of the evidence was, that if the Companies were to be considered as having been on their trial, *they were entitled*

to a verdict of acquittal, and that no case had been made out for the reversal of railway policy which their colleagues advocated. They added that it would hardly be disputed that the Railways had on the whole conferred great benefits upon Ireland.

On the question of reductions in rates (reductions which the Majority Report strongly urged as necessary), they did not think that reductions were more likely to occur under public than under private ownership. They suggested, further, that the official statistics of various countries showed that the fall in the average rate had been much greater on the privately owned railways of France and the United States than on the State-owned railways of Prussia, which were universally accepted as the most favourable example of State managed railways in the world. They came to the conclusion, after hearing all the evidence, that the management of the principal Irish Companies was not inferior to that of similar companies in England and Scotland. They narrated the many improvements (with which they seemed much impressed) that Irish Companies had in recent years effected for the benefit of the public and the good of the country, and said " they had spent money, and not always profitably, in endeavouring to promote the development of new industries." They considered the principle of private ownership should be maintained, believing that railways are better and more economically managed by directors responsible to their own shareholders than they would be under any form of State or popular control, and that administration on commercial principles was the best in the public interest.

In their opinion, however, the Irish railway system was faulty by reason of its sub-division into so many independent companies, and they recommended a policy of amalgamation, with the ultimate object of including the principal railways in one single system, and also, that certain lines classed as railways, but which were really tramways serving purely local interests, need not be incorporated with the general railway system. Such amalgamation, they considered, need not be effected at one time, but should be accomplished gradually. Failing amalgamation by voluntary effort within three years, compulsion should be resorted to.

On the whole the Reports were highly satisfactory to the Irish railways.

They showed that the Companies had done their duty to the country honestly and well, and that they had been unjustifiably attacked. The good character of the Irish railways was thus re-established, and they again held their rightful place in public esteem.

Of the two I much preferred the Minority Report. The working of the Irish railways (in accordance with its Recommendations) as business concerns on commercial principles, seemed to me both sound and sensible and the policy best calculated to serve the interests of the country. I cannot, however, say that I concurred in that part of the Minority Report which proposed the welding of all the railways of Ireland into one great system. In my humble opinion, the formation of three large systems—a Northern, a Midland and a Southern—was the desirable course to adopt. This course would, at any rate, keep alive the spirit of emulation which, in itself, is a wholesome stimulant to enterprise and endeavour, as well as to economy.

The Majority Report, which amongst other things said, " We consider it obvious that Irish development will not be fully served by the railways until they cease to be commercial undertakings," found favour mostly, I think, with those who looked upon Ireland as an exceptional country requiring eleemosynary treatment, and whose railways ought, in their view, to be placed beyond the ordinary healthy necessity of paying their way. Our Chairman, the Honourable Richard Nugent, addressing his shareholders at the time, put the matter rather neatly. He said : " The case, as recommended by the Majority Report, stands thus—the Government to find the money for purchasing the railways; the Government to guarantee the interest on the capital cost; the County Councils to work the railways on uncommercial lines; the Government to pay to the extent of £250,000 a year any deficiency incurred by uncommercial management; and any further annual losses to be paid by the County Councils striking a general rate, which you and I and all of us would be required to pay." He added, " Does this seem a businesslike proposal?"

The Government took no steps towards carrying out the Recommendations of either Report. Perhaps they thought them so nearly divided, and so almost evenly balanced, that the one neutralised the other. They may

also have thought that each Report made it clear that the Irish railways were well managed, not lacking in enterprise or energy, were doing well for the country; and that, therefore, the wisest course was to " let well alone."

Were we living in ordinary times, had there been no world-wide war, with its vast upheavals and colossal changes, it would be both interesting and profitable to further discuss the Reports, their conclusions and recommendations; but the war has altered the whole railway situation, and it would be idle to do so now. Victor Hugo says: " Great events have incalculable consequences," which is unquestionably true in respect of the railways and the war. The vital question now in regard, not only to the railways of Ireland, but to the railways of the whole United Kingdom, is as to their future. It is, however, with the Irish railways I am specially concerned, and of them I may pretend to have a little knowledge, which must be my excuse for saying a few words more on the subject.

The Irish railways, like those of Great Britain, are at present controlled by the Government, under the *Regulation of the Forces Act*, 1871—a war arrangement which is to be continued, under the powers of the *Ministry of Transport Act*, for a further period of two years, " with a view to affording time for the consideration and formulation of the policy to be pursued as to the future position " of the railways. This arrangement, temporary in its nature, provides, as is pretty generally known, that during its continuance, the railway companies shall be guaranteed the same net income as they earned in the year preceding the war, viz., 1913. So far so good. But two years will quickly pass; and what then? It is also generally known that the Government control of the railways, during the war and since, has resulted in enormous additions to the working expenses. Perhaps these additions were inevitable. The cost of coal, and of all materials used in the working of railways, advanced by leaps and bounds; but the biggest increase has been in the wages bill. The Government granted these increases of wages, and also conceded shorter hours of labour, involving an immensity of expense, on their own responsibility, without consultation with the Irish railway companies. Upon the Irish railway companies, for the present position of affairs no responsibility, therefore, rests. Again I say, the course which the Government adopted was, perhaps, inevitable. They had to win the war.

Labour was clamorous and insistent, and serious trouble threatened. High reasons of State may be presumed to have dictated the Government policy. Anyhow the thing is done, and the hard fact remains that the Irish railways have been brought to such a financial condition that, if they were handed back to the companies, many of them not only could not pay any dividends but would be unable to meet their fixed charges whilst some would not be able to even pay their working expenses.

In England the opinion is held that a proper balance between receipts and expenditure can be restored by increased charges and reduced expenditure. This may be so in England, with its teeming population and its almost illimitable industrial resources. As to that I venture no opinion, but Ireland is very differently situated. It is mainly an agricultural country, and for most of its railways no such promising prospect can, it seems to me, be discerned. To *unduly* increase rates would diminish traffic and induce competition by road and sea. Past experience teaches this.

It used to be said that railway companies asserted, in justification of their rates, that they were fixed on the principle of " what the traffic could bear," and the companies were reproached on the ground that the principle involved an injustice, but a principle which involved the imposition of rates beyond what the traffic *could bear*, could hardly be said to be either sound or just. However that may be, the Government have imposed upon the Irish railways a burden of working expenses which they cannot bear. What is the remedy? Whatever course is adopted, it is devoutly to be hoped that it will be fair and just to the proprietors of a railway system, which has done so much for Ireland, and in respect of which the proprietors have received on their capital an annual return averaging less than 4 per cent.! No bloated capitalists these. Irish railway shareholders largely consist of people of moderate means, and their individual holdings, on the Midland Great-Western, for example, average only £570 per shareholder.

Whilst I am by nature optimistic, I must confess that in these latter days my optimism occasionally receives a shock. Nevertheless, I believe that the spirit of justice still animates the British people and Parliament; that fair treatment will be accorded to the owners of Irish railways, and that

they shall not suffer by the policy which the Government, under the stress of war, have pursued. Railway directors are alive to the seriousness of the position, and may I think be trusted to see that no precaution will be neglected to secure for their companies fair terms from the Government. Shareholders also I am glad to observe are banding themselves together for the protection of their interests.

CHAPTER XXIX

The General Managers' Conference, Gooday's Dinner, and Divers Matters

Soon after the Vice-Regal Commission had concluded its public sittings, and long before its Reports were issued, I had the pleasure of receiving from the associated companies a cordial minute of appreciation of the work I had done, accompanied by a handsome cheque. Nor was this mark of appreciation confined to me. My friend, Croker Barrington, Solicitor to the Committee, who had given yeoman service, and my capable assistants, were not overlooked.

Sir William Goulding was proud of his chairmanship, and well he might be, for during the long and trying period of the Inquiry he kept his team well together and (no easy task) discharged the duties of Chairman with admirable tact and ability. He was well entitled to the Resolution of cordial thanks which the associated companies accorded to him. I should, I feel, be lacking in gratitude if I failed to acknowledge also the invaluable help afforded me by my brother managers, help ungrudgingly and unstintingly given.

The Irish railways did not stand still. Their march along the path of progress and improvement continued *sans* interruption. From 1906 to 1910 (the Commission period) railway business, measured by receipts, advanced in Ireland by seven per cent., compared with six per cent. in England and three per cent. in Scotland!

In November, 1909, as was my habit unless prevented by other important duties, I attended the General Managers' Conference at the Railway Clearing House in London, and to my surprise and delight was unanimously elected Chairman of the Conference for the ensuing year, the first and only occasion on which the Manager of an Irish railway has been selected to fill that office.

The Conference consists of the General Managers of all railways who are parties to the London Clearing House, which means all the principal railways of the United Kingdom. Other Conferences there were such as the Goods Managers', the Superintendents', the Claims Conference, etc., but it was the General Managers' Conference that dealt with the most important matters.

I remember that, in returning thanks for my election, I ventured on a few remarks which I thought appropriate to the occasion. Amongst other things I said it was breaking new ground for the Conference to look to Ireland for a Pope, but that in doing so they exhibited a catholicity of outlook which did them honor; and I added that, in filling the high office to which they had elected me, though I should certainly never pretend to the infallibility of His Holiness, I should no doubt find it necessary at times to exercise his authority. At ten o'clock in the morning this little attempt at pleasantry seemed to be rather unexpected, but it raised a laugh, which, of course, was something to the good. The Conference was a businesslike assembly that prided itself on getting through much work with little talk—an accomplishment uncommon at any time, and particularly uncommon in these latter days. In these restless days when—

" What this troubled old world needs,
Is fewer words and better deeds."

My year of office quickly passed and I got through it without discredit, indeed my successor to the chair, Sir (then Mr.) Sam Fay, writing me just after his election, said that I " had won golden opinions," and expressed the hope that he would do as well. Of course he did better, for he was far more experienced than I in British railway affairs, and this was only his modesty. My friend Sir William (then Mr.) Forbes was my immediate predecessor as Chairman, and to him I was indebted for the suggestion to the Conference that I should succeed him in the occupancy of the chair.

Early in the year 1910 a delightful duty devolved upon me, the duty of presiding at a farewell dinner to J. F. S. Gooday, General Manager of the Great Eastern Railway, to celebrate his retirement from that position, and his accession to the Board of Directors. For some years it had been the custom, when a General Manager retired, for his colleagues to entertain him to dinner, and for the Chairman of the Conference to officiate as Chairman at the dinner. Gooday's brother Managers flocked to London from all parts of the kingdom to do him honor, for whilst he was esteemed for his ability as a manager, he was loved for his qualities as a man. Of refined tastes, including a *penchant* for blue china, being a thriving bachelor, he was able to gratify them. We were so fond of him that the best of dinners was not enough, in our estimation, to worthily mark the occasion and to give him the pleasure he wished, and we presented to him some rare blue vases which *Cousin Pons* himself would have been proud to possess.

By virtue of my office of Chairman of the Conference, I also, during 1910, sat as a member of the Council of the *Railway Companies' Association.* This Association, of which I have not yet spoken, merits a word or two. As described by its present Secretary, Mr. Arthur B. Cane, it is " a voluntary Association of railway companies, established for the purpose of mutual consultation upon matters affecting their common interests, and is the result of a gradual development." It dates back as far as the year 1854, when a meeting of Railway Directors was held in London to consider certain legislative proposals which resulted in the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of that year. In its present form it consists of all the principal railway companies of the United Kingdom, each Company being represented by its Chairman, Deputy Chairman, General Manager and Solicitor. A Director of any so associated Company, who is a Member of Parliament, is also *ex officio* a member of the Association. As its membership increased it was found that the Association was inconveniently large for executive purposes, and some twenty years or so ago a *Council* was formed with power to represent the Association on all questions affecting general railway interests. At this moment this Council is engaged in looking after the interests of the railway companies in the matter of the great *Ways and Communications Bill.* By the suffrages and goodwill of my colleagues in Ireland, who had the election of one member,

I remained on the Council till the end of the year 1912. Mr. Cane states that " The Association has always preserved its original character of a purely voluntary association, and has been most careful to safeguard the independence of its individual members." Also, that it has " been expressly provided by its constitution that no action shall be taken by the Council unless the members are unanimous." For many years Sir Henry Oakley was its honorary secretary, performing *con amore* the duties which were by no means light, but in 1898 it was resolved to appoint a paid secretary and to establish permanent offices, which now are located in Parliament Street, Westminster. Mr. (now Sir Guy) Granet was the first paid secretary, Mr. Temple Franks succeeded him, and Mr. Cane, as I have already mentioned, is the present occupant of the office.

In the autumn of 1910 I visited the English Lakes and spent a fortnight in that beautiful district, in the company, for the first few days, of Walter Bailey; and during the latter part of the fortnight, with E. A. Pratt as a companion. It was the last holiday Bailey and I spent together, though happily at various intervals we afterwards met and dined together in London, and our letters to each other only ended with his lamented death.

In the year 1913 a new form of Railway Accounts came into operation. This new form became compulsory for all railways by the passing, in 1911, of the *Railway Companies (Accounts and Returns) Act.* This Act is the last general railway enactment that I shall have to mention, for no legislation of importance affecting railways was passed between 1911 and 1913; and since the war began no such legislation has even been attempted, excepting always the *Ways and Communications Bill* which, as I write, is pursuing its course through the House of Commons.

The form of half-yearly accounts prescribed by the *Regulation of Railways Act,* 1868, admirable as they were, in course of time were found to be insufficient and unsatisfactory. They failed to secure, in practice, such uniformity as was necessary to enable comparisons to be made between the various companies, and in 1903 a Committee of Railway Accountants was appointed by the Railway Companies' Association to study the subject, with the view of securing uniformity of practice amongst British railways in preparing and publishing their accounts. This Committee, after an ex-

penditure of much time and trouble, prepared a revised form, but the companies failed to agree to their general adoption, and without legislation, compulsion could not of course be applied. This led to the Board of Trade, who were keen on uniformity, appointing, in 1906, a Departmental Committee on the subject. On this Committee sat my friend Walter Bailey. The Committee heard much evidence, considered the subject very thoroughly, and recommended new forms of Accounts and Statistical Returns, which were (practically as drawn up) embodied in the Act of 1911, and are now the law of the land. From the shareholders' point of view the most important changes are the substitution of annual accounts for half-yearly ones, and the adoption of a uniform date for the close of the financial year. In addition to the many improvements in the direction of clearness and simplicity which the new form of accounts effected, the following two important changes were made:—

(1) *All information relating to the subsidiary enterprises of a company to be shown separately to that relating to the railway itself*

(2) *A strict separation to be made of the financial statements from those which were of a purely statistical character*

The first of these alterations had become desirable from the fact that practically all the larger railway companies had, in the course of years, added to their railway business proper such outside enterprises as steamships, docks, wharves, harbours, hotels, etc.

One bright morning, in the autumn of 1911, I was summoned to the telephone by my friend the Right Honorable Laurence A. Waldron, then a Director of the Dublin and Kingstown Railway, and now its Chairman. He said there was a vacancy on the Kingstown Board; and, supposing the seat was offered to me, would I be free to accept it? As everybody knows, it is not usual for a railway manager, so long as he remains a manager, to be a director of his own or of any other company; so, " I must consult my Chairman," said I. The Dublin and Kingstown being a worked, not a working line, the duties of its directors, though important are not onerous, and my Chairman and Board readily accorded their consent. Such was my first happy start as a railway director.

THE GRESHAM SALVER

The Dublin and Kingstown has the distinction of being the first railway to be constructed in Ireland. Indeed, for five years it was the only railway in that country. Opened as far back as 1834, it was amongst the earliest of the railway lines of the whole United Kingdom. The Stockton and Darlington (1825), the Manchester and Liverpool (1830), and the Dundee and Newtyle (1831), were its only predecessors. Soon after its construction it was extended from Kingstown to Dalkey, a distance of $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles. This extension was constructed and worked on the *atmospheric* system, a method of working railways which failed to fulfil expectations, with the result that the Dalkey branch was, in 1856, changed to an ordinary locomotive line.

The atmospheric system of working railways found favour for a time, and was tried on the West London Railway, on the South Devon system, and in other parts of Great Britain, also in France, but nowhere was it permanently successful. The reason of the failure of the system on the Dalkey extension, Mr. Waldron tells me (and he knows all about his railway, as a Chairman should) was due to the impossibility of keeping the metal disc airtight. The disc, shaped like a griddle, was edged with leather which had to be heavily greased to enable it to be drawn through the pipe from which the air was pumped out, in order to create a vacuum, and the rats, like nature, abhorring a vacuum, gnawed the greasy leather, letting in the air, and bringing the train to a standstill!

The Kingstown Railway was also interesting in another respect, as illustrating the opposition which confronted railways in those early days. There was a Mr. Thomas Michael Gresham, who was the owner of the well-known Gresham Hotel in Dublin, and largely interested in house property in Kingstown—Gresham Terrace there is called after him. He organised a successful opposition to the Dublin and Kingstown Railway being allowed—though authorised by Parliament—to go into Kingstown, and its terminus was for some years Salthill Station (Monkstown) a mile away. Mr. Gresham's action was so highly appreciated—incredible as it now appears—that he was presented with a testimonial and a piece of plate for his "*spirited and patriotic action.*" I have adorned this book with a photograph of the salver which, with the inscription it bears, will I think, in these days, be not uninteresting.

The year 1911 was darkened for me by the shadow of death. During

its course I lost my wife, who succumbed to an illness which had lasted for several years, an illness accompanied with much pain and suffering borne with great courage and endurance.

CHAPTER XXX

From Manager to Director

I had long cherished the hope that when, in the course of time, I sought to retire from the active duties of railway management, I might, perhaps, be promoted to a seat on the Board of the Company. Presumptuous though the thought may have been, I had the justification that it was not discouraged by some of my Directors, to whom, in the intimacy of after dinner talk, I sometimes broached the subject. But I little imagined the change would come as soon as it did. I had fancied that my managerial activities would continue until I attained the usual age for retirement—three score years and five. On this I had more or less reckoned, but

> *"There's a divinity that shapes our ends*
> *Rough hew them how we will,"*

and it came to pass that at sixty-one I exchanged my busy life for a life of comparative ease. And this is how it came about. A vacancy on the Board of Directors unexpectedly occurred in October, 1912, while I was in Paris on my way home from a holiday in Switzerland and Italy. I there received a letter informing me that the Board would offer me the vacant seat if it really was my wish to retire so soon. Not a moment did I hesitate. Such an opportunity might never come again; so like a prudent man, I "grasped the skirts of happy chance," and the 5th day of November, 1912, saw me duly installed as a Director of the Company which I had served as Manager for

close upon twenty-two years. It was an early age, perhaps, to retire from that active life to which I had been accustomed, but as Doctor Johnson says, "No man is obliged to do as much as he can do. A man is to have a part of his life to himself." I made the plunge and have never since regretted it. It has given me more leisure for pursuits I love, and time has never hung heavy on my hands. On the contrary, I have found the days and hours all too short. Coincident with this change came a piece of good fortune of which I could not have availed myself had not this alteration in my circumstances taken place. Whilst in Paris I heard that Mr. Lewis Harcourt (now Viscount Harcourt), then Colonial Secretary, had expressed a wish to see me as I passed through London, and on the 28th of October, I had an interview with him at his office in the House of Commons. There was a vacancy, he informed me, on the recently appointed Dominions' Royal Commission, occasioned by the resignation of Sir Charles Owens, late General Manager of the London and South-Western Railway, and a railway man was wanted to fill his place. I had been mentioned to him; would I accept the position? It involved, he said, a good deal of work and much travelling—voyages to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada and Newfoundland. Two years, he expected, would enable the whole of the work to be done, and about twelve months' absence from England, perhaps rather more, but not in continuous months, would be necessary. It was a great honor to be asked, and I had no hesitation in telling him that as I was on the eve of being freed from regular active work, I would be more than happy to undertake the duty, but—"But what?" he inquired. I was but very recently married, I said, and how could I leave my wife to go to the other side of the globe alone? No need to do that, said he; your wife can accompany you; other ladies are going too. Then I gratefully accepted the offer, and with high delight, for would I not see more of the great world, and accomplish useful public work at the same time. Duty and pleasure would go hand in hand. I need not hide the fact that it was one of my then Directors, now my colleague, and always my friend, Sir Walter Nugent, Baronet (then a Member of Parliament), who, having been spoken to on the subject, was the first to mention my name to Mr. Harcourt.

Soon after my retirement from the position of Manager of the Midland,

my colleagues of the Irish railway service, joined by the Managers of certain steamship companies that were closely associated with the railways of Ireland, entertained me to a farewell dinner. Mr. James Cowie, Secretary and Manager of the Belfast and Northern Counties Section of the Midland Railway of England (Edward John Cotton's old line), presided at the banquet, which took place in Dublin on the 9th of January, 1913. It was a large gathering, a happy occasion, though tinged inevitably with regrets. Warm-hearted friends surrounded me, glad that one of their number, having elected to retire, should be able to do so in health and strength, and with such a smiling prospect before him.

When I became a Midland Director, Mr. Nugent was no longer Chairman of the Board. He had been called hence, after only a few days' illness at the Company's Hotel at Mallaranny, near Achill Island, where, in January, 1912, he had gone for a change. In him the company lost a faithful guardian and I a valued friend. He was succeeded by Major H. C. Cusack (the Deputy-Chairman), who is still the Chairman of the Company. A country gentleman of simple tastes and studious habits, Major Cusack, though fond of country life, devotes the greater part of his time to business, especially to the affairs of the Midland and of an important Bank of which he is the Deputy-Chairman. The happy possessor of an equable temperament and great assiduity he accomplishes a considerable amount of work with remarkable ease. For his many estimable qualities he is greatly liked.

On the 14th of November I made my *début* as a Dominions' Royal Commissioner, at the then headquarters of the Commission, Scotland House, Westminster. Soon the Commissioners were to start on their travels, and were at that time holding public sittings and taking evidence.

This is a narrative of railway life at home, not of Imperial matters abroad, and it is therefore clearly my duty not to wander too far from my theme; nevertheless my readers will perhaps forgive me if in my next chapter I give some account of the Commission and its doings. The fact that I was placed on the Commission chiefly because I was a railway man is, after all, some excuse for my doing so.

CHAPTER XXXI

The Dominions' Royal Commission, the Railways of the Dominions and Empire Development

For the first time in the history of the British Empire a Royal Commission was appointed on which sat representatives of the United Kingdom side by side with representatives of the self-governing Dominions. This Commission consisted of eleven members—six representing Great Britain and Ireland and five (one each) the Dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, and Newfoundland. The Commission came into being in April, 1912. It was the outcome of a Resolution of the Imperial Conference of 1911. The members of that Conference and of others which preceded it had warmly expressed the opinion that the time had arrived for drawing closer the bonds of Empire; that with the increase in facilities for communication and intercourse there had developed a deepened sense of common aims and ideals and a recognition of common interests and purposes; and that questions were arising affecting not only Imperial trade and commerce but also the many other inter-relations of the Dominions and the Mother Country which clamantly called for closer attention and consideration. The time at the command of the Conference was found to be too short for such a purpose, and it was to study problems thus arising, and to make practical recommendations that our Commission was appointed.

The individuals forming the Commission were, first and foremost, Lord D'Abernon (then Sir Edgar Vincent). He was our Chairman, the biggest

man of us all; ex-banker, financial expert, accomplished linguist; a sportsman whose horse last year won the Irish St. Leger; an Admirable Crichton; an excellent Chairman. Then came Sir Alfred Bateman, retired high official of the Board of Trade, a master of statistics and unequalled in experience of Commissions and Conferences. He was our Chairman in Canada and Newfoundland and a most capable Chairman he made. Sir Rider Haggard, novelist, ranked third; a master of fact as well as of fiction; a high Imperialist, and versed both theoretically and practically in agriculture and forestry. Next came Sir William (then Mr.) Lorimer of Glasgow, a man of great business experience, an expert authority in all matters appertaining to iron and steel and in fact all metals and minerals. He was Chairman of the North British Locomotive Company and of the Steel Company of Scotland, also a Director of my old company, the Glasgow and South-Western Railway. Then Mr. Tom Garnett (christened Tom), an expert in the textile trade of Lancashire, owning and operating a spinning mill in Clitheroe; a good business man as well as a student of " high politics," a scholar and a gentleman. Of the last and least, my humble self, I need not speak, as with him the reader is well acquainted.

Canada's representative was the Right Honorable Sir George Foster, Minister of Trade and Commerce, steeped in matters of State, experienced in affairs, a keen politician and a gifted orator.

Australia selected as her representative Mr. Donald Campbell, a clever man, well read and of varied attainments, sometime journalist, editor, lawyer, Member of Parliament, and I don't know what else.

The Honorable Sir (then Mr.) J. R. Sinclair was New Zealand's excellent choice. A barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of his country, he had retired from practice but was actively engaged in various commercial and educational concerns and was a member of the Legislative Council of New Zealand.

South Africa's member was, first, Sir Richard Solomon, High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa in London. He died in November, 1913, when Sir Jan Langerman took his place. Sir Jan was an expert in mining, ex-President of the Rand Chamber of Mines, and ex-Managing Director of the Robinson Group, also a Member of the Legislative Assembly

of South Africa. Keen and clever in business and a polished man of the world, he was a valuable addition to the Commission.

Lastly, Newfoundland was represented by the Honorable Edgar (now Sir Edgar) Bowring, President and Managing Director of a large firm of steamship owners. He was experienced in the North Atlantic trade, in seal, whale and cod fishing and other Newfoundland industries. He was also a member of the Newfoundland Legislative Council.

Such were the members of the Commission. All endowed with sound common sense and some gifted with imagination.

Shortly stated the main business of the Commission was to inquire into and report upon:—

(*a*) The natural resources of the five self-governing Dominions and the best means of developing these resources

(*b*) The trade of these parts of the Empire with the United Kingdom, each other, and the rest of the world

(*c*) Their requirements, and those of the United Kingdom, in the matter of food and raw materials, together with the available sources of supply

The Commission was also empowered to make recommendations and suggest methods, consistent with then existing fiscal policy, by which the trade of each of the self-governing Dominions with the others, and with the United Kingdom, could be improved and extended.

Mr. E. J. Harding, C.M.G., was our Secretary. An Oxford man of distinction, a member of the permanent staff of the Colonial Office, studious, enthusiastic, energetic, of rare temper, tact and patience, he was all such a Commission could desire. He and three or four assistants, with local officers selected by the Governments in each of the Dominions, one and all most capable men, formed a Secretariat that served us well.

The Commission started operations by taking evidence in London in the autumn of 1912, but its main work lay in the Dominions, and on the 10th of January, 1913, we sailed for Australia and New Zealand, touching at Fremantle (Western Australia), Adelaide (South Australia), Melbourne (Victoria), and Hobart (Tasmania) on our way.

In New Zealand we travelled through the island from south to north, staying in that beautiful country for nearly a month, and holding sittings in the principal cities. One sitting we held in the train—a record surely for a Royal Commission. Easter intervening, we indulged in a few days' holiday in the wonderful Rotorua district, where we enjoyed its hot springs, its geysers, its rivers, its lakes and its Maori villages. Returning to Sydney, we travelled northwards to Queensland and there entered seriously upon our Australian duties, holding sittings at Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Hobart and Perth. In Queensland we penetrated north as far as Bundaberg, Gladstone, Rockhampton and Mount Morgan. In the other States tours were made through the irrigation areas of New South Wales and Victoria, and visits paid to the mines at Broken Hill (New South Wales), the Zeehan district and Mount Lyall (Tasmania); Iron Knob (South Australia), and Kalgoorlie (Western Australia). Some of our party penetrated to remoter parts of Australia such as Cairns (Northern Queensland), Condobolin (west of New South Wales), and Oodnadatta (Central Australia), still the furthest point of railway extension toward the great Northern Territory.

To Tasmania we were able to devote a few days, taking evidence and enjoying its wonderful beauty.

Finally, we left Australia on the 9th of June, four months after our first landing on its sunny shores.

On arriving home it was determined that for the remainder of the year 1913 we should remain in England and take further evidence in London.

We resumed our travels in January, 1914, when we left for South Africa. There we held a number of sittings, taking evidence at Capetown, Oudtshoorn, Port Elizabeth, East London, Kimberley, Bloemfontein, Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Pretoria and Johannesburg. Our journeys to these various places were so planned as to involve our travelling over most of the principal railway lines of the Union, so that we were able to see a considerable portion of its beautiful scenery as well as its great mining and pastoral industries. Our work finished, most of us returned direct to England, but some were able to penetrate northwards into Rhodesia, and return by way of the East Coast of Africa.

It was our intention, after taking further evidence in London, to proceed

to Canada and Newfoundland, and to return home before the winter began, when we looked forward to making our Final Report. This intention we partially fulfilled, as in July, 1914, we sailed from Liverpool, and after exchanging steamers at Rimouski, landed at St. John's, Newfoundland. There we stayed for a few days whilst the crisis in Europe deepened. We then travelled through the island by railway and crossed to the Maritime Provinces of Canada. On that fatal day in August on which war broke out we were in Nova Scotia. A few days after, the British Government, considering that under such conditions we could not finish our work in Canada, called us home. In common with many of our countrymen we indulged in the hope that the duration of the war would be a matter of months and not of years, and that we should be able to resume our work in Canada in the autumn of 1915. But this was not to be. However, in 1916, the Governments represented on the Commission came to the conclusion that the completion of our work ought not to be longer delayed, and accordingly, in August, 1916, we sailed again to Canada.

In the Maritime Provinces of Canada, in 1914, we visited Sydney, Cape Breton, Halifax, the Annapolis Valley and Digby in Nova Scotia; St. John, Fredericton and Moncton in New Brunswick, and Charlottetown in Prince Edward Island.

In 1916 the resumption of our Canadian work began at Montreal. Thereafter, the great mining districts of Northern Ontario engaged our attention, where, amongst other valuable products of the earth, nickel, silver and gold abound. From Ontario we travelled westward to Prince Rupert on the British Columbian coast, holding sittings at Saskatoon, Edmonton and Prince Rupert. We then proceeded by steamer, through glorious scenery, southward to Victoria, Vancouver Island. At Victoria and also at Vancouver we took evidence. From Vancouver we journeyed eastwards by the Canadian Pacific Railway over the Rockies, breaking our journey and holding sittings at Vernon, in the Okanagan Valley, at Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec, devoting several days each to many of these places. Whilst in British Columbia we also visited the lower part of the Okanagan Valley, and whilst in the prairie provinces stopped at Medicine Hat (where the gas lamps burn day and night because it would cost more in

wages than the cost of the gas to employ a man to turn them out). In Ontario we visited North Bay, Fort William, Port Arthur, Guelph and Niagara Falls. In addition some of us travelled through the mining districts of British Columbia, and also inspected the asbestos mines at Thetford, in the Province of Quebec.

This is the bald outline of our long and interesting journeys, which by land and sea comprehended some 70,000 miles. How bald it is I keenly feel, and it would afford me more pleasure than I can tell to give some account of our wonderful experiences—of the delight of sailing in southern seas; of the vast regions of the mainland of Australia; of the marvels of its tropical parts; of the entrancing beauty of New Zealand and Tasmania; of the wonders of Canada, the variety of its natural productions, its magnificent wheat-growing areas; of the charm of South Africa with its glorious climate and its beautiful rolling veldt. What a memory it all is! Tranquil seas, star-lit nights, the Southern Cross, noble forests, glorious mountains, mighty rivers, boundless plains; young vigorous communities under sunny skies, with limitless space in which to expand. I should love to enlarge on these things, but a sense of proportion and propriety restrains my pen.

In all the Dominions we were received with the warmest of welcomes and most generous hospitality—governments, municipalities and corporations vieing with each other in doing us honor, whilst private individuals loaded us with kindness. It was clear that our mission was popular, and clear too that affection for the old country was warm and lively. I cannot attempt to narrate all that was done for us—banquets, receptions, excursions, garden parties, concerts—time and space will not allow. But I cannot be altogether silent about the splendid special train which the South African Government placed at our disposal from the time we left Capetown until we reached Johannesburg, which (taking evidence at the various places on the way) occupied several weeks. This sumptuous train consisted of dining car, sleeping cars and parlour car, was liberally staffed and provisioned; with a skilful *chef*, polite and attentive waiters and attendants. It was practically our hotel during those forty days or more.

In Australia and New Zealand, more than once, the various governments provided us with special cars or special trains to visit their remoter districts

with the greatest possible comfort. The same was the case in Newfoundland, whilst the Canadian Government lent to us a steamer—the *Earl Grey*—for our journey from Rimouski to Newfoundland, which since has done good service for the Allied cause in the war.

In Canada we travelled from Montreal to Prince Rupert, some 3,000 miles, in a handsome and most commodious car kindly lent to us by Sir Daniel Mann, one of the founders of the Canadian Northern Railway. It, too, was our home and hotel during the ten days which that journey occupied. The longest passenger vehicle I had ever seen, it had ample kitchen, dining room, sitting room, sleeping and " observation " accommodation for us all, with an excellent bathroom and the luxury of a shower bath.

On all our journeys to and from the Dominions, and in all our expeditions by sea or by land, my wife accompanied me. She was an excellent traveller. There is considerable difference in our years; but, as Dickens has said: " There can be no disparity in marriage save unsuitability of mind and purpose." The only lady who accompanied the Commission everywhere, she was sometimes called "The Lady Commissioner." One must not praise one's own, but this much I may say: Her Irish wit and bright unselfish ways made her, everywhere and always, a welcome addition to the Commission party.

After November, 1916, we held no more public sittings, took no further evidence, but sat down at Spencer House (one of the many stately London residences lent by their owners to the Government during the war) and there, in its ballroom, industriously worked out our Final Report. This, of course, reviewed the whole subject of our inquiry and embodied our final conclusions and recommendations. To the credit of the Commission be it said, these conclusions and recommendations were entirely unanimous, as also were those in each of our Interim Reports, published in connection with the Dominions separately.

In this Final Report the subject of railways was not included. Railways of course formed part of our inquiry, but they were dealt with in our Interim Reports.

To a large extent railways were more a matter of domestic than of Imperial concern, but as the development of the resources of the Dominions

depended greatly upon the adequacy of railway transit, the subject came within the province of our inquiry. I will not trouble the reader with statistics (which can be readily obtained elsewhere) beyond the following statement which represented, at the time we made our investigations, the railway mileage and the population in each Dominion compared with the United Kingdom:—

	Miles of Railway.	Population.	Number of Inhabitants per Mile of Railway.
Canada	35,600	8,075,000	280
Australia	18,000	4,500,000	250
South Africa	8,800	1,300,000*	150†
New Zealand	2,900	1,052,000*	370
Newfoundland	800	250,000	320
United Kingdom	23,500	46,000,000	1,950

* White population.
† If native population taken into account the approximate figure is 700 inhabitants.

It is clear that railway construction has not been neglected in the Dominions, and that, measured by population, the mileage is considerable. Speaking generally, the Dominion railways are highly efficient and serve their purpose well. Extensions were being projected and many were in course of construction for the further development of natural resources and of trade and commerce.

In Australia the railways, with the exception of certain lines belonging to the Commonwealth, are owned and worked by the several States. We found them paying full interest on the cost of construction, and sound assets of the country. The cost of working was, however, greatly increasing, due mainly to increase of salaries and wages. How this stands since the war I do not know; but that expenses have further advanced goes without saying. An important railway witness whom we examined expressed the opinion that increased expenditure could be recouped by increased rates. Perhaps that is still true. If it is, the railways of Australia are happier than most of the railways in Ireland.

The railways of New Zealand belong to and are worked by the Government. For many years the Government, looking upon the railways as an adjunct to the settlement and development of the country, only expected them to return 3 per cent. interest on the capital expended. In 1909 this policy, however, was modified, $3\frac{3}{4}$ to 4 per cent. being then regarded as a proper result, and this result was accomplished. Water power in New Zealand is so abundant that the adoption of electricity for railway working has been engaging the attention of the Government. Many, well qualified to judge, were satisfied that it would prove more economical than steam locomotion.

In both Australia and New Zealand, borrowing for railway construction had been by means of general loans raised for all kinds of Government expenditure. We came to the conclusion that if loans for reproductive works, such as railways, had been segregated from others, it would have helped the raising of capital, and probably secured easier terms.

The construction of railways in Canada has, in recent years, proceeded at a rapid pace. We found that the mileage had doubled since the beginning of the present century, due, to a large extent, to the construction of two new Trans-Continental lines. The grain-growing districts of the prairie provinces, south of latitude 54 degrees, are now covered with a network of railways, and British Columbia has three through routes to Eastern Canada.

The enterprise of the principal Canadian railway companies is remarkable. They own and operate not only railways, but also hotels, ferry services, grain elevators, lake and coast steamers, as well as Trans-Atlantic and Trans-Pacific steamers. One company also has irrigation works, and ready-made farms for settlers in the prairie provinces. But Canada lies so near to us, and in the British Press its railways receive such constant attention, that I need not descant further upon them.

In South Africa, with the exception of about 500 miles mainly in the Cape Province, the railways are all Government owned, and are worked as one unified system. The Act of Union (1909) prescribed that the railways and the harbours (which are also Government owned and worked) were to be administered on business principles, and that the total earnings should not exceed the necessary expenditure for working and for interest on capital. Whenever they did, reductions in the rates, or the provision of

greater facilities, were to restore the balance. This provision also had the effect of preventing the imposition of taxation upon the community by means of railway rates. The Act contained another practical clause, designed to block the construction of lines from political considerations. Any line constructed contrary to the advice of the Railway Board, if it resulted in loss, the loss was to be a charge, not upon the general railway revenue, but upon the Consolidated Fund—a useful " brake," which I have no doubt has often pulled up hasty and impetuous politicians.

South African railways enjoy one great advantage—cheap coal for their engines. In 1913 the average cost at the pit's mouth was 4s. 11½d. per ton.

The railways of Newfoundland have had a chequered history. Now they are Government property, worked by a private company under a 50 years' lease, which dates from 1901, and under that lease no rent is paid. As the capital expenditure (about £3,000,000) averages less than £4,000 per mile, it may be conceived that the railway system of Newfoundland is not of an extravagant character, and in my humble opinion, the country deserves something much better. In our fourth report (on Newfoundland) we stated: " It must also be said that the state of the permanent way does not conduce to speedy or comfortable travelling."

The gauges of the Dominions' railways are very varied. In Australia there are three—5 ft. 3in., 4 ft. 8½ in. and 3 ft. 6 in., with some 300 miles or so of less than 3 ft. 6 in. The Commonwealth has for some time been considering the conversion of the lines into one standard gauge, the British gauge of 4 ft. 8½ in. being favoured. The cost of this conversion naturally increases the longer action is deferred, and in any case would be very great. It was officially estimated at the time of our visit at £37,000,000.

New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and Newfoundland are each the happy possessor of one gauge only. In Canada it is the British gauge of 4 ft. 8½ in., and in New Zealand, South Africa and Newfoundland, 3 ft. 6 in.

Our Final Report was signed on the 21st of February, 1917, and published as a Blue Book in the usual way, but, what is rarely done with any Blue Book, it was also published in handy book-form, bound in cloth, at the popular price of 1s. 6d. Blue Books do sometimes contain matter of general interest, are sometimes well written and readable, and would be

more read if presented to the public in a handy form such as we succeeded in publishing.

The main purposes of the Commission I have already briefly stated. They embraced many subjects for inquiry and study, of which the following are the most important, and regarding each of which it may be appropriate to say a word or two:—

External Trade of the Self-Governing Dominions

We ascertained and compiled in detail, tables of theImports and Exports, distinguishing Trade with (*a*) the United Kingdom, (*b*) the other parts of the Empire, and (*c*) with foreign countries. The figures showed the need there was for an Imperial trade policy, which should lead to British manufacturers and merchants cultivating more the Dominion markets, and utilising more the vast resources of raw materials which the Dominions possess. We found that a detailed examination of existing conditions, and practical and definite proposals for the removal of difficulties, were required.

Natural Resources of the Dominions

In regard to agricultural matters we gathered and published much information, finding that in one part or other of the Dominions all animals and almost every crop flourished that are needed by man, that if the products of the more tropical parts of the Empire were taken into account, the Empire could meet more than its own needs; and that if men existed in sufficient numbers in our Dominions, there was scarcely any limit to the external trade they could do. In this part of our Inquiry we found to what a considerable extent people concentrated in large cities to the detriment of the country districts. " Back to the land " is a question there of as much if not greater moment than in the Mother Country. The mineral resources of the Dominions, like the agricultural, provided us with a big subject. In every Province or State, by oral evidence, by official statistics, by discussion with Government geologists, officials of the Mines Departments and others, we gathered a large amount of valuable information. The volumes of printed evidence give full particulars of this and other subjects. The mineral deposits of Canada especially are varied in character and large in respect both of quantity and value—gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, nickel, coal,

iron, asbestos, natural gas, petroleum, peat, gypsum—all are found in unstinted quantity. Nor are the other Dominions deficient. The goldfields of Australia are historic, and the silver, lead and zinc mines of Broken Hill deserve particular mention. In South Africa gold and diamonds are plentiful; and Newfoundland has wonderful deposits of iron ore.

In forests and fish the Dominions abound, and possess enormous possibilities of extended trade.

Conservation and Development of Natural Resources in the Future

This subject received our earnest attention. We considered that the various Governments of the Empire should take steps to secure the development and utilisation of their natural wealth on a well considered scheme, and that to do this, a preliminary survey was needed of the relation between Empire production and Empire requirements. No such survey, as far as we knew, had yet been undertaken, but in the *Memorandum and Tables relating to the Food and Raw Material Requirements of the United Kingdom*, which we submitted to His Majesty in 1915, the Commission had made an effort, not without some measure of success, in this direction. We regarded it as vital that the Empire's supplies of raw material and commodities essential to its safety should be, as far as possible, independent of outside control, and made suggestions which aimed at effecting this object. We recommended that the survey mentioned above should be made by an Imperial Development Board, which should be entrusted with the whole subject.

Scientific Research in Relation to the Development of Natural Resources

We dwelt on the importance of securing to all parts of the Empire adequate facilities for scientific research in connection with the development of their natural resources; and, in connection with this, made certain recommendations as regards the Imperial Institute, for the purpose of increasing its efficiency and usefulness.

Migration

To this important matter we devoted much time and thought, not only in London, but in each of the Dominions as well, obtaining much valuable

evidence and personally examining the circumstances and conditions that prevailed. No Imperial question, we considered, could be of greater importance than this. We made many recommendations, some of which have already been adopted, whilst the remainder are coming into great prominence now that the war is over. In the past we found no effort had been made to regulate emigration from the United Kingdom, and we proposed the establishment of a Central Emigration Authority. The surplus of females in the United Kingdom, increased unfortunately by the war, will probably result in many young women seeking their fortune overseas, and we urged increased facilities and better regulations for their migration, showing how best we considered they could be given.

Oversea Communications

To this subject, which embraced sea transport, harbours, waterways, mail communications, postal rates, freight rates, etc., we devoted considerable time, calling attention in particular to an aspect of the question never, so far as I know, investigated before, viz., the urgency of constructing deep harbours suited for the deep draught vessels which alone can carry on cheap and rapid transport. We made recommendations as to the improvements immediately necessary on the great trade routes, and urged that future schemes should be submitted to an Imperial Development Board.

Telegraphic Communications

In the far distant Dominions, cable communication is a matter of great importance to the community; and increased facilities and cheaper rates are much desired. Some of the recommendations we made to this end have since been adopted.

Improvement in Commercial Practice

This presented a large field for inquiry; and, after much investigation, we made recommendations on Trade Intelligence; Trade Commissioners and Correspondents; Consular Service; Improvements in Statistics; Conference of United Kingdom and Dominion Statisticians; and other matters, all of which we considered were of practical necessity.

Lastly, the need of creating an *Imperial Development Board* engaged our

serious attention. Early in our Inquiry we had been impressed with the necessity for the appointment of some board or body whose constant duty it should be to consider questions affecting Imperial trade and development, from the point of view of the interests of the whole Empire. We took some evidence on the subject, discussed it with leading men in the Dominions, gave the question much thought, and finally recommended the establishment of a new Imperial Development Board, which should include not only representatives of the United Kingdom and all the Dominions, but also of India, the Crown Colonies and the Protectorates. In the course of our work we had been much impressed with the inadequacy of existing organisations to deal promptly and efficiently with such matters as the following:—

Telegraphic, cable and shipping communications between the various portions of the Empire

Inter-Imperial mail services and postal rates

The development of harbours and waterways on the great routes of commerce to meet Imperial requirements

Migration as a factor in Empire development and trade

Legislation affecting the mechanism of trade, such as that on patents, companies, copyright, weights and measures, etc.

The application and better utilisation of capital raised in the United Kingdom and other parts of the Empire, towards promoting the development of the Empire's resources

The systematic dissemination throughout the Empire of news bearing upon Imperial questions and interests

The preparation and publication of Imperial statistics

Better organisation for handling and for disposal of the produce of various parts of the Empire

These, and subjects of a similar nature, we considered should be assigned to the proposed Board as its ordinary work; and to the duty of advising the Governments on these matters would be added that of collecting the necessary particulars bearing upon them, involving research not only into the conditions prevailing in the Empire, but into the methods of rival trading countries.

To a large Board we were opposed. We suggested that members should

be required to give their whole time to the work, and that representation of the various parts of the Empire might be as follows:—

United Kingdom, India, Crown Colonies and Protectorates ...	7
Canada	1
Australia	1
New Zealand	1
South Africa	1
Newfoundland	1
	12

Such is a brief summary of our Mission, our Report, and our Recommendations.

Whilst we were impressed by the vast extent and infinite variety of the Empire domain we were also touched by the sentiment which held together its widely scattered parts. Without this sentiment, and without loyalty to the Crown and Mother Country, what, we often thought, would happen?

The war has taught us much as to the unity of the Empire. Peace, we may be sure, will bring its own lessons, perhaps its own dangers, in its train. To strengthen the bonds so loosely yet so finely drawn must henceforth be the constant duty of the Statesmen of the Empire. The governing machinery requires overhauling, demands adjustment to the needs of the various sections of the Empire, and to the throbbing anxiety of each to share in the duties and responsibilities of Empire Government and Development.

CHAPTER XXXII

Conclusion

The year 1917 terminated our Dominions' Commission work and brought to a close the fiftieth year of my railway life. As if to mark the occasion, Dame Fortune gave me a pleasant surprise, and what it was I will now relate.

In an earlier chapter I have spoken of the Letterkenny to Burtonport Railway (in North-West Donegal), with the early stages of which, in 1897, I had something to do. Now, in 1917, twenty years later, I was to become still more intimately acquainted with it, and, in an unexpected but practical way, concerned in its domestic affairs.

Though the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company, which worked the Burtonport line, was a railway of only 14½ miles in extent, it was entrusted with the working of no less than 85 other miles, 50 of which consisted of the Burtonport railway—a condition of things quite unique: the tail wagging the dog!

The total capital expenditure on the whole of the 100 miles of line worked by the Lough Swilly Company amounted to £727,000. Of this sum about £500,000, or 68 per cent., was money provided out of Government funds. The ordinary stock of the Lough Swilly Company was the exceedingly small sum of £50,330, upon which for twenty years a dividend of 7 per cent. had been regularly paid.

The Burtonport line was opened for traffic in 1903. From the first, its management, to say the least, was faulty and illiberal. So early in its

history as 1905 an inquiry into its working was found to be necessary, and I was asked by the Board of Works to undertake the inquiry. I did so, and I had to report unfavourably, for " facts are chiels that winna ding." For some time after my report things went on fairly well, but only for a time. The Board of Works were, by Act of Parliament, custodians of the public interest in the matter of this and other similar railways, and a long-suffering and patient body they were. From time to time they complained, protested, adjured, threatened; sometimes with effect, sometimes without. Years rolled on and matters grew worse. Loud public complaints arose; the patience of the Board of Works exhausted itself, and a climax was reached.

The Railways Ireland Act, 1896, provides that where any railway, constructed under that Act, or under other Irish Light Railway Act, had been aided out of moneys provided by Parliament, the Board of Works might, at any time, appoint " a fit person to inspect and report upon the condition of the undertaking and the working, maintenance and development of the same," and if such " fit person " reported that the undertaking was " not efficiently worked, maintained and developed " the Privy Council might then make an Order appointing a manager or receiver of the undertaking, with such powers as should be specified in the Order. The powers thus given are, it will be observed, certainly drastic.

In April, 1917, Sir George Stevenson, K.C.B., the Chairman of the Board of Works, asked me would I make such an inquiry for them into the Burtonport line, and, considering myself a " fit person," I gladly answered *Yes*. Sir George Stevenson was Tom Robertson's successor, though not his immediate successor, as another George (Sir George Holmes) came between. He (the reigning Chairman) was, in 1892, appointed a Commissioner of the Board of Works; and in 1913 he attained the position of Chairman; and the chair it is generally conceded has never been better filled. He has the advantage of continuous experience of Treasury business since 1886, and possesses an exceptional knowledge of all matters, local and otherwise, affecting the development of State Railways in Ireland.

My inquiry I may, I am sure, without immodesty, say was thorough and complete. On the 7th of May I presented my report. The facts which I found were such that only one conclusion was possible—the line was not

in good condition; was not and had not been efficiently worked, maintained or developed. I will not harrow my readers with a description of its condition. One little quotation from the summing up in my report will suffice to indicate the state of affairs, and, to the imaginative mind, present a picture of the whole. " Everything has for years past been allowed to run down; the direction and management have been characterised by extreme parsimony; and the disabled condition of the engines is undoubtedly due to lack of proper upkeep, which must have been going on for years. The state of the permanent way shows a want of proper maintenance; and the condition of the stations, buildings and of the carriages speaks of neglect."

In fairness, I ought to say that the direction and management responsible for these things are not the direction and management that exist to-day.

Mr. Henry Hunt, the present General Manager of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Company, was appointed to that position in September, 1916. He came from the Great Central Railway. This is what I said about him in my report: " He is a good railway man, capable and experienced. He has assumed and exercises an authority which none of his predecessors possessed, and is keen to do all he can to improve matters and develop the railway." Further acquaintance with Mr. Hunt has more than confirmed my high opinion of him.

In due time my report was submitted to the Privy Council, which august body, after hearing all that was to be said on the subject by the Lough Swilly Railway Company and others, made an Order which is the first of its kind—an Order which, for a period of two years, took out of the hands of the Lough Swilly Railway Directors the management of the Burtonport Railway, and placed it in the hands of Mr. Hunt, subject to my supervision. The Order said: " Henry Hunt, at present the General Manager of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company, is hereby appointed Manager of the said undertaking of the said railway under and subject to the supervision of Mr. Joseph Tatlow, Director of the Midland Great Western Railway Company of Ireland." Then followed various clauses defining the duties and authority with which Mr. Hunt, as Manager, was invested.

This appointment, to supervise, under the Privy Council, the management of the Burtonport line, was the pleasant surprise which Dame Fortune brought me in my fiftieth year of railway work.

The duties of the office began on the 1st of July, 1917, and the two years prescribed have expired; but Mr. Hunt's management and my supervision have, by Privy Council Order, been extended for a further period. My story may not go beyond fifty years, but this I may say, that what Hunt and I were able to accomplish in the first six months of our novel *régime* was an augury of what we have accomplished since, and that a grateful public throughout the district of North-West Donegal, which the Burtonport Railway serves, does not stint its praise. Trains are punctual now, engines do not break down, carriages are comfortable, goods traffic is well worked, and delays are exceptional. Much has been done, more would have been done but for difficulties due to the war, and a good deal still remains to be done.

In North-West Donegal, some two years ago, the idea of writing this book was conceived, and with North-West Donegal its pages close. As I lay down my pen, some words which I used in my opening chapter recur to my mind. I then expressed the hope that, in spite of all its drawbacks, my story, if faithfully told, might not be entirely devoid of interest, and now that I have finished my task, I humbly trust that the hope then expressed has been attended with some measure of success, and that my purpose has not altogether failed.

THE END.

INDEX.

PAGE

Accidents Compensation Act, 1846 52
Accounts, form of railway 53, 193
Acts of Parliament, general railway 49
Acworth, W. M. 145, 166, 183
Advertisements on railway stations 66
Alcorn, J., Great Southern & Western Railway 137
Allerton, Lord 109
Allport Commission, 1887 91, 93, 107, 109
Allport, Sir James 15, 22, 35, 39, 76, 77
Analysis of railway accounts 59
Anderson, Alexander, surfaceman poet 79
Andrews, Thomas, and the *Titanic* 101
Andrews, Thomas, Right Honorable 100, 109, 111
Apollo Belvidera 24
"Appeal unto Cæsar" 22
Arbitration, my first case 99
Ardglass Light Railway 108
Aspinall, Sir John 181, 183
Athenry and Ennis Junction, railway rates and charges, Order Confirmation Act, 1892 138
Athenry and Ennis Railway 121, 134, 155
Atmospheric railways 195
Atock, Martin 119, 126, 127
Austria, Empress of 125

Bailey, Walter 99, 151, 193, 194
Bailie, the, Glasgow 61, 79
Baillie, G. L. 110
"Balfours Act"—Light railways, Ireland 197
Ballinasloe Fair 125
Barrington, Croker 179, 190
Bateman, Sir Alfred, K.C.M.G. 201
"Battle of the Gauges" 52
Beach, Sir Michael Hicks 142
Beaux 77, 98
Belfast and County Down Railway 91, 94
Belgium, a tour in 113
Benedict, a youthful 25
Benefit Society, Midland Great Western Railway 130

PAGE

"Bigg's General Railway Acts" .. 48
Birt, Sir William 153
Block working 106
Board of Trade inquiry as to railway rates 104
Board of Trade, the 139
Bowring, the Hon. Sir Edgar 202
Boyhood, pleasures and amusements 7
Boyhood, Schoolmaster "Jessie" 9
Bridge Street Station, Glasgow 47, 66
Brother to a baronet 45
Browne, Balfour, K.C. 150, 155, 159, 160, 180
Buchanan Street Station, Glasgow 40
Buncrana to Carndonagh Railway 152
Burns, Mr. John (Lord Inverclyde) 73, 133
Burtonport Railway 152, 215
Bushe, Seymour 155, 159
Butterley Tunnel, the 29
Butterworth, Sir Alexander 105

Caledonian Railway Stores Superintendent 32, 44
Cambuslang, our lodgings at 42, 43
Campbell, Donald 201
Campbell, the Right Hon. Sir James, Baronet, Lord Chancellor of Ireland 180
Cane, Arthur B. 192
Carlyle, Thomas 80
Carriages, four-wheeled 5
Carriages, second-class, abolition of 38
Carriers' Act, the 1830 49
"Champagne Charley" coats 19
Charles Lamb, "plumb pudding" 49
Cheap Trains Act, 1883 89
City of Dublin Junction Railway 120
City of Glasgow Bank, failure of 76
Clerks in office, Derby 23
Colhoun, R. G. 137, 153
Collier, Dr. 110
Committee Rooms, Westminster 135, 136
Committee, Select, 1840 50
Companies Clauses Act, 1845 51
Competitive traffic 65

PAGE

Concealed bed, a 40
Connemara 129, 173
Constantinople 162
Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act, 1878 88
Continuous brakes, a trial of, at Newark 87
Continuous Brakes Act, 1878 .... 87, 106
Conveyance of Mails, Railways, Act, 1838 50
Cook, Thomas, & Son 170
Cooper, David 68
Cork, Blackrock & Passage Railway 170
Cotton, Edward John 97, 98, 115, 122
Country walks 18, 30
Cowie, James 199
Cromford Canal and Butterley Tunnel 28
Culverwell, G. P. 152
Curtsey, the 18
Cusack, Major H. C. 175, 199
Cusack, Sir Ralph 113, 116, 117, 118, 119, 129, 136, 138, 175
Cynicus 42, 43, 78, 126

D'Abernon, Lord 200
Dan Godfrey's band 62
Dargan, William 124
Delicate health 5, 17, 21, 91, 181
Dent, Charles 174
Derby, General Manager's Office 57
Dickens, Charles 8, 17, 30
Dickie, David 65
Directors, railway 34
Directorship, my first 194
Diseases of Animals Act, 1894 144
Drudgery of the desk 29
Dublin & Kingstown Railway, opposition to 195
Dublin & South Eastern Railway 157
Dundreary whiskers 19
Dunoon, bazaar at 42

Edinburgh.... .... 41, 44
Egypt and the Nile 170
Elliott, Thomas 120
Employers' Liability Act, 1880 88
Engineer, Midland Railway 32

Family album 20
Fares, first-class, reduction of 37
Farmer, Ned 22
Fashions, Victorian days 18
Father, my 4
Fay, Sir Sam 191
Fenton, Sir Myles 76
Findlay, Sir George 131, 136, 141
" First-footin' " 40

PAGE

First public speech 46
Fitzgibbon, G. 180
Forbes, Sir William 191
Foster, the Right Hon. Sir George 201
Franks, Temple 193
Friends in Glasgow 78
Funeral customs 20

Galloway, Andrew 86
Galway, " City of the Tribes " 129
Galway, Trans-Atlantic Steamship Service 129
Garnett, Tom 201
Garrotters 20
Gauge of railways 51
General managers' conference 191
General managers in Ireland 90
General Manager's Office, Derby 57
General Railway Acts of Parliament 49
Gibb, Sir George 158
Gill, W. R. 113, 114
Gillies, F. H. 69
Glasgow & South-Western Railway 37
Glasgow & South-Western Railway, my removal to the 47, 57
Glasgow Bailie, the 61, 79
Glasgow, Bridge Street Station 47, 66
Glasgow, Buchanan Street Station 40
Glasgow flats 41
Glasgow landlady, our 41
Glasgow, S. Enoch Station 58, 66
Golf, its introduction in Ireland 110
Gooday, J. F. S. 192
Goods-train-delays Clerk 22
Goulding, Right Hon. Sir William 179, 180, 190
Grand Canal, arbitration 151
Granet, Sir Guy 57, 193
Great Eastern Railway 35
Great Eastern steamer 7
Great Northern Railway to King's Cross 37
Great Southern & Western Railway 134, 156
Great Western cooking depôts 44
Greene, George William 119
Gresham, Thomas Michael 195
Grierson, James 76, 83, 103
Guinness & Co., a *stout* resistance 139
" Gumpots " 24
Gweedore Hotel 1

Haggard, Sir Rider 201
Harcourt, Viscount 198
Harding, E. J., C.M.G. 202
Harrison, Sir Frederick 77

PAGE

Health, delicate 5, 17, 21, 28, 91, 181
Healy, T. M., K.C. 180
Hogmanhay 40
Holland, Cologne and the Rhine 151
Holliday, William 157
Hopwood, Sir Francis (Lord Southborough) 139
Hornsby, John P. 120
Horsemanship 5, 102
Hospitality, Ballinasloe 126
Hours of work of railway men 107, 142, 143
Hudson, George, the "Railway King" 12
Hunt, Henry 217

Imperial Development Board 213
Income Tax, 3d. in the £ 45
Ingram, Joseph 179
Interference of outsiders.... 95
Interlocking points and signals 106
International Railway Congress 144, 150, 166
Invercelyde, Lord (Mr. John Burns) 73, 133
Ireland, general managers in 90
Ireland, holiday 66
Irish Board of Works 148, 174, 180, 216
Irish Department of Agriculture 154
Irish Railway Clearing House 15, 97, 148
Irish railways abused 178
Irish railways, progress of 169, 190
Isle of Man, a steamboat service 112

Jekyll, Sir Herbert, K.C.M.G. 183
Johnstone, Mr., Glasgow & South-Western Railway 56
Jubilee, the railway 62
Junior clerk, salary 21

Kaiser, the 177
Kedleston Inn 31
Kelly, R. W. .... - 85, 94
Kempt, Irvine 65
Kilkelly, John 177
King Edward, visit to Ireland 173
Kinnegar, the first golf links in Ireland 110
Knox, Vesey, K.C. 155, 180

Ladies' manners, Victorian days 18
Lands Clauses Act, 1845.... 51
Langerman, Sir Jan 201
Letterkenny to Burtonport Railway ....-152, 215
Light Railway Acts, Ireland, 1860–1883 108
Light Railway, definition of 109

PAGE

Light Railways Act, 1896 150
Light railways in Connemara, Kerry, Mayo and Donegal 108
Light railways in Great Britain.... 109, 167
Light Railways (Ireland) Act, 1889 107
Limerick, the joybells 161
"Little Jim" 23
Littler, Sir Ralph.... 135, 136, 155, 157, 159
Liverpool and Manchester Railway, the 13, 50, 195
Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company 152, 215
Long Jack 26
Lorimer, Sir William 201

McCorquodale & Co. 42
McDermott, Edward 141
McDermott, F. 141
MacLaren, James.... 65
Mann, Sir Daniel 206
Martin, Robert, of Ross 128
Martin, Sir Theodore 161, 162
Mathieson, John 64
Maximum rates and charges 104, 106
Maypole, the 31
Meerschaum pipe, colouring of 20, 35, 102
Midland and Glasgow and South-Western Alliance 58
Midland Great Western Railway and "Balfour Lines" 108
Midland Great Western Railway Benefit Society 130
Midland Great Western Railway, extent of, &c. 113, 116
Midland Railway, comparison with year 1851 11
Midland Railway, present general manager .... -4, 57
Midland Railway, progress of 36
Midland Railway, proposed amalgamation with L. & N.W. 12
Miller, R. G. 92
Mills, A. E. 123
Mills, W. F. 121, 123
Mills, W. H. 169
Ministry of Transport 179, 187
Money grants for light railways, Ireland 107
Monte Carlo 177
Montreal Herald, the 67
Moore, Charles A. 99
Morris, Sir George 128, 163
Morrison, Robert 120
"My old Wife's a good old cratur" 23

PAGE

Mylchreest, Joseph, the "Diamond King" 112

National Insurance Act 131
New Year's Day 44
Newcastle golf links, County Down 111
Newcomen Junction battle 120
North British Railway 75
North West Donegal 1, 218
Notice of Accidents Act, 1894 143
Nugent, the Hon. Richard 153, 175, 186, 199
Nugent, Sir Walter, Bart 198

Oakley, Sir Henry 76, 77, 193
O'Connor, Sir Nicholas 163
Office hours, 1868 22
Office life, beginning of 21
O'Neill, Michael 130
Owens, Sir Charles 198

Parcel post receipts, Irish railways 137
Paris 80, 166, 198
Parker, William 22, 23
Parliament yields to popular clamour 105
Parliamentary Committee, evidence before 135, 156
Pay-day in office 26
Pease, Edward 62
Peel, Isle of Man 112
Pember, Mr., K.C. 135, 155, 159
Penmanship, imitation of 22
Pim, F. W. 182
Pinion, James 94, 99
Pirrie, Lord 85, 92, 183
Pitman's shorthand 29, 32
Plews, Henry 97, 150, 153
Poë, Colonel Sir Hutcheson 183
Poetical productions 6
Pope, Mr. Samuel, K.C. 135, 155, 159, 160
Portrush golf links 110
Post Office (Parcels) Act, 1882 88
Power, John F. 157
Practical railway work 97, 103
Pratt, Edwin A. 105, 182, 193
Prince and Princess of Wales 34, 145
Privy Council Order, Burtonport Railway 217
Prize fights, trains for 54
Pullman Cars 36, 38, 58

Quirey, John 179

Railway Accounts, analysis of 59

PAGE

Railway Accounts, form of 53, 193
Railway and Canal Commission 54, 120
Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1854 52
Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888 103, 113, 121, 132
Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1894 144
Railway Benevolent Institution 67, 84, 121
Railway Clauses Act, 1845 51
Railway Clearing House 15
Railway Companies (Accounts and Returns) Act, 1911 193
Railway Companies' Association 192
Railway Companies' Powers Act, 1864 53
Railway Construction Facilities Act, 1864 53
Railway Employment (Prevention of Accidents) Act, 1900 161
Railway Gazette, the 141
Railway life in Ireland 115
Railway mania, 1845 .... 14, 50
Railway News, the 67, 100, 141
Railway Ramblers 67
Railway Regulation Act, 1840 50
Railway Regulation Act, 1844 50
Railway Regulation Act, 1893 142
Railway Regulation (Gauge) Act, 1846 52
Railway Societies.... 68
Railway Statistics 59
Railway system of Scotland 63
Railways (Electric Power) Act, 1903 176
Railways Fires Act, 1905 176
Railways, Inspection of 54
Railways Ireland Act, 1896 149
Railways of the Dominions 207
Railways, Scotland, England and Ireland compared 64, 142, 169
Railways, State purchase of 51
Railways, the future of 187
Rates and fares 32, 82
Regulation of Railways Act, 1868 53
Regulation of Railways Act, 1871 54
Regulation of Railways Act, 1873 54
Regulation of Railways Act, 1889 106
Reid, A. G. 65, 157
Revision of railway rates 104, 138
Roberts, William 152
Robertson, Tom 65, 91, 98, 137, 148, 150, 151
Robson, Sir Mayo 181
Rock Villa.... 32
Rolling stock, County Down Railway 92
Running powers 135, 156, 159, 160
Russell, George 69
Russell, Lord John 126

PAGE
Ryan, Martin, cattle dealer 135

Sabbath, breaking the 41
St. Enoch Station, Glasgow 58, 66
St. Pancras Station, opening of.... 36
St. Rollox, Glasgow, lunch 45
Saloon, the Dargan 124
Schooldays, country walks 18
Schooldays, reading and drawing 17
Scotter, Sir Charles 180, 183
Scottish railways 63
Second-class carriages, abolition of 37
Select Committee, 1840 50
Select Committee on railway charges, 1881 82
Select Committees, 1858 and 1863 53
Settle and Carlisle line 36, 37, 38
Sexton, Thomas 183
Shanahan, George 180
Shaw, Sir Alexander 157
Shorthand, Pitman's 29, 32
Sighthill Cemetery, lunch on a tombstone 45
Sinclair, the Hon. Sir John 201
Sinclair, Right Hon. Thomas 110
Skipworth, W. G. 97, 113
Sleeping cars 38
Smiles, Samuel 141
Smoking compartments 53
Smyth, G. E. 179
Southborough, Lord (Sir Francis Hopwood) 140
Spain and Portugal, visit to 146
Speech, first in public 46
Spencer, Lord 158
State purchase of railways 51
Stephens, Mr. Pembroke, K.C. 136, 147
Stephenson, George 62
Stevenson, Sir George, K.C.B. 216
Stirling, James 65
Stockton & Darlington Railway 50, 62, 195

PAGE
Superannuation funds 39, 116
Swarbrick, Samuel 35
Swearing, an accomplishment 20, 26

Tailor's dummy, a perambulating 24
Tatlow, Frank 57
Tatlow, William 132
Terminals 82
Theodore Hook's old joke 22
Third-class carriages by all trains 36, 38
Thompson, Sir James 77, 138
Time-tables and train working 33
Tom 29, 70
Trade unionism 22
Trades Disputes Act, 1906 176
Trans-Atlantic steamship service, Galway 129

Ulster & Connaught Railway 174

Visinet, Tony 80

Wainwright, Mr. W. J. 46, 56, 59, 60, 66, 73, 76, 86
Waldron, the Right Hon. Laurence A. 194
Wales, Prince and Princess of 34
Walker, John 75, 133
Walklate, Thomas 22
Walks, favourite 18, 30
Warming pans 20
Waterford & Limerick Railway 134, 135, 155, 156
Watkin, Sir Edward 56, 76, 77
Way bills 21
Wells, E. W. 57
Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906 177

Young, Right Hon. John 99
Youthful benedict, A 25

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