

PRESTON AND WYRE RAILWAY.

Dublin, 24th November 1871.
 Sir,
 IN compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 28th ult., I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the collision, that occurred on the 21st ult. at Kirkham station on the Preston and Wyre Railway.

This railway is leased by the London and North-Western Railway Company and by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company conjointly.

The collision occurred with a goods and a passenger train of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company.

On the day in question a goods train, which consisted of an engine and tender, 14 empty, 8 loaded waggons, and a guard's van, arrived from Blackpool at Kirkham at its proper time, 8.20 p.m. The train stopped at the west side of the station, as the 14 empty waggons were to be put in the sidings and left at Kirkham, and 10 loaded waggons had to be taken out of the Kirkham sidings and were to be taken on by the goods train to Preston.

The Kirkham station signals were lowered for the goods train to approach, and the signals were again raised to "danger" when the goods train stopped opposite to the sidings at the west side of Kirkham station. The eight loaded waggons and the guard's break van, which formed the tail end of the goods train, were detached and left standing on the main up line when the goods train stopped at Kirkham station.

The 14 empty waggons were placed in the sidings at the north side of the railway, and the engine and tender had been moved across to the sidings at the south side of the railway to fetch some of the loaded waggons that were to be taken on, when the Kirkham station shunter, who was assisting in making up the goods train, heard the signal wires being pulled.

An up passenger train was due at the time. The guard of the goods train and the shunter had heard the passenger train engine driver whistling for the Kirkham signals a moment before the signal wires were pulled. The shunter, on hearing the signal wires pulled, said, "That man has given the signals," and he ran away with a red hand lamp to try and stop the passenger train, but he was unable to prevent the passenger train from running into the eight loaded waggons and van at the tail of the goods train, which had been left standing on the main line.

The 8.10 p.m. up passenger train from Fleetwood to Manchester left Fleetwood at 8.12 p.m., and arrived at the west end of Kirkham station at 8.42 p.m. It consisted of an engine and tender, a passenger carriage, a guard's van, with a guard, eight passenger carriages, and a second guard's van, with another guard. The vehicles were coupled together in the order in which they are given, and all the coaches, except the one next to the tender, were fitted with Fay's continuous breaks.

The signals at Lytham junction, which is about a mile to the west of Kirkham station, were at "all right" for the passenger train. The Kirkham up distant signal, which is 800 yards to the west of Kirkham station signal, and which can be seen as soon as Lytham junction is passed, was at "danger" at the

time. The engine driver of the passenger train whistled for the Kirkham signals, and both the up distant signal and the signal at Kirkham station were lowered to "all right." The passenger train ran on towards the station.

The lights at the tail of the goods train that was standing on the main up line were hidden from the view of the driver of the passenger train by a curve in the line and by some high waggons that were in the siding at the north side of the railway. He was not aware that the goods train was on the up line, on which he was travelling, until his engine was about 70 or 80 yards from the van at the tail of the goods train. Steam was shut off at the time. The driver whistled for the guard's breaks, reversed his engine, and his fireman put on the tender break, but he could not pull up before his engine struck the van at the tail of the goods train, at a speed variously estimated at 4 to 10 miles an hour. The cast-iron buffer heads and the head lamp of the passenger engine were broken and one life guard was bent. The van at the tail of the goods train was broken, one pair of wheels of the third waggon from the van were knocked off the rails, and the axle guards of this waggon were damaged. The buffers of another waggon were broken.

The guard in the front van was cut over the eye, and one passenger received a slight bruise over the eye. The draw bar was pulled out of the first carriage of the train, and the passenger carriages became detached from the engine and tender, which were brought to a stand about 10 yards in front of the leading carriage of the passenger train. This front carriage, which was not acted upon by the continuous breaks, belonged to the London and North-Western Railway Company. The engine driver of the passenger train stated, "I think the train, having more break power applied than my engine, stopped when the collision occurred, and my engine in moving on, pulled the draw bar out of the London and North-Western carriage."

I have no doubt that the engine driver's opinion is correct, and that it was owing to the large amount of break power in the passenger train that the passengers escaped with so little injury.

It appears that the signalman on duty at Kirkham station left his post and went into the town about 8.5 p.m. He returned just as the driver of the up passenger train was whistling for the Kirkham station signals to be taken down, and he pulled off the signals without looking to see if the line was clear. The collision was caused by the signalman's neglect. He did not appear to give his evidence. He has been dismissed from the company's service, which I conceive is far too light a punishment for his misconduct. The goods train should not have been left on the main up line when a passenger train was due. Station masters should be held responsible, and be required to prevent such practices.

I have, &c.,

*The Secretary
 (Railway Department),
 Board of Trade.*

F. H. RICH,
Lieut.-Col., R.E.

SHREWSBURY AND HEREFORD RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade,
 Railway Department,
 13th January 1872.*

Sir,
 IN compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 16th ult., I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances connected with the collision that occurred on the 11th ult. at Stretford Junction, on the Shrewsbury and Hereford Railway.

No persons are reported to have been injured. The Shrewsbury and Hereford Railway is owned conjointly by the Great Western and London and North-western Railway Companies.

Stretford Junction is about three quarters of a mile to the north of Craven Arms station.

The Bishop's Castle Railway joins the Shrewsbury and Hereford Railway at Stretford Junction.

On the day in question a Great Western goods train, which consisted of an engine and tender, two