

The Croydon Guardian.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1882.

SLEEPY SIGNALMEN.

Two latter half of last week furnished quite a crop of railway accidents, among which were the case of one woman run over and killed at a level crossing, one playmate sacrificed while at work, one train thrown off the line through an axle breaking, and three collisions of a serious character, though fortunately not attended with fatal results. The death of the poor woman and of the luckless playmate may possibly be ascribable to personal inattention (not to say carelessness), from which we may always expect accidents to happen, on railways as elsewhere; and these casualties would cost the companies nothing. But in the other four unhappy railway accidents, what can be said for the signalmen, for "care for compensation," were produced, though no life was lost. Now, in regard to the broken axle which threw one train off the line, we can doubtless trust the company, in their own interest, to make a close investigation into the special cause of this mishap, and to take any precautions for the future that observation may suggest. To give railway managers their due, they are not mechanical defuncts tending to produce accidents. We therefore pass by the railway accidents, which were presumably caused by the inattention of railway servants, and not by any defects in the lines or rolling-stock. We notice that all three of these misadventures occurred, not on the crowded lines of the Metropolitan, or even of a manufacturing district, but upon rural sections of great lines, where there is generally ample accommodation for the traffic. What can be said for the signalmen, who thus appear to be greater where traffic is comparatively light than upon the crowded rails of such lines as the Metropolitan Underground, with trains passing every few minutes? Cogitating for a solution of this apparent anomaly, we came upon the case of a railway signalman prosecuted before the Croydon magisterial bench for theft. In the course of the proceedings it transpired that the prisoner's pay was £1 a week for twelve hours labour per day or night (including, we suppose, Sundays). The presiding magistrate put the pertinent question, "Are they presumed to be on the same spot all the twelve hours of the night?" and receiving an affirmative reply from the station-master, the magistrate expressed his opinion in the concise but expressive exclamation, "Too long!"—a view in which the station-master coincided. But the next questions and answers are very suggestive in regard to the cause of railway collisions—"Are they supposed to be awake all the time?—Yes. Do you believe they are?—No. Perhaps neither the one nor the other." Perhaps this case, nor any other, will be much affected by a remonstrance which the Croydon bench directed the station-master to convey to his superiors against this excessive time of duty for signalmen, and an intimation to the magistrates would be well to keep alive at their posts. But railway companies may well ask themselves, whether, in their own pecuniary interest, it is good policy to trust the safety of their lines and rolling-stock, and their more precious passengers, to signalmen not believed by a station-master to keep awake at their posts. We can quite aware what may be urged in behalf of the companies with regard to the state of the labour market. No doubt, £1 a week for non-laborious and idle day employment will bring forward an ample supply of candidates for the signal, especially in rural districts. But we are sure that the men are very severely tasked in comparison with those in various other occupations. Many of the London shop-assistants who are now demanding and partially obtaining a small reduction of time, work from twelve to fifteen or sixteen hours a day; while of a poor journeyman baker, who last week escaped from intolerable drudgery by suicide, it was stated in evidence that "he worked from eleven o'clock at night until five or six in the morning, and even later on Saturdays and Sundays." From a philanthropic point of view, therefore there are tollers that there is a stronger claim on public commiseration than railway signalmen. But the public have a direct interest with regard to the work of the signalmen, which they have not in the case of other classes. And we submit that the employers of the railway rollers have an interest which the employers in the other cases have not. Danger to passengers involves actual penalties to companies, as well as restriction of trade. What is the advantage of a railway, if a complete receipt is thus diminished, and every year has to pay heavily a compensation to injured passengers?

OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

Croydon, October 5th.

By the late meeting of the Croydon

the following view of Croydon has been

have been reminded of the fact that the

establishments" for there is a manifest

of maladministration. It would be too

to suppose that Croydon is a town

of the Croydon House, even if it were

as little covered by British history as already

is. But, of course, this accident does not

not satisfy either our military triumph

in the past, or our diplomatic difficulties now

lacking of these by the time Parliament meets

on the 26th, and Ireland continues to calm

down, there could not be so much difficulty about

the Procedure Resolutions.

On Thursday the few friends had their

provision, which in a manner prefigures that of

the Lord Mayor, and which is increasing in ceremony

and magnificence as the Lord Mayor's day draws

near. A little extra fare was made this year perhaps

in amount of the popularity of Mr. Pollock.

Mr. Keyser, who is a Belgian, a Roman Catholic, and

a devoted supporter of the cause, has been

a great success in his efforts to secure

the cause of the poor and the oppressed.

We have seen a number of the London

City, where we think it necessary to

be aware of the fact that the

face of which was not many years

ago a very different one. Mr. Milner

in his speech on Sheriff Day shows that

the City is still in a state of alarm on the subject

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A close-up photograph of a brick wall. A prominent horizontal crack runs across the middle of the frame, separating two courses of bricks. The bricks are light-colored and show some weathering. The mortar joints are visible. The lighting is somewhat uneven, with the crack being the central focus.

AT DEATH.
\$7 PER WEEK
When Disabled

