

NOTES ON RAILROAD ACCIDENTS

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Notes on Railroad Accidents by Jr. Adams

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JR. ADAMS

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RAILROAD ACCIDENTS

BY

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS, JR.

AUTHOR OF "RAILROADS: THEIR ORIGIN AND PROBLEMS,"



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G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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PREFACE.

This volume makes no pretence whatever of being either an exhaustive or a scientific study of the subject to which it relates. It is, on the contrary, merely what its title signifies,—a collection of notes on railroad accidents. In the course of ten years service as one of the railroad commissioners of Massachusetts, I was called upon officially to investigate two very serious disasters,—that at Revere in 1871, and that at Wollaston in 1878,—besides many others less memorable. In connection with these official duties I got together by degrees a considerable body of information, which I was obliged to extract as best I could from newspapers and other contemporaneous sources. I have felt the utmost hesitation in publishing so crude and imperfect a performance, but finally decide to do so for the reason that, so far as I know, there is nothing relating to this subject in print in an accessible form, and it would, therefore, seem that these notes may have a temporary value.

During my term of public service, also, there have been four appliances, either introduced into use or now struggling for American recognition, my sense of the value of

which, in connection with the railroad system, to both the traveling and general public, I could not easily overstate. These appliances are the MILLER PLATFORM and BUFFER, the WESTINGHOUSE BRAKE, and the INTERLOCKING and ELECTRIC SIGNAL SYSTEMS. To bring these into more general use through reports on railroad accidents as they occurred was one great aim with me throughout my official life. I am now not without hopes that the printing of this volume may tend to still further familiarize the public with these inventions, and thus hasten their more general adoption.

C. F. A. JR.

Quincy, October 1, 1879.

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IT is a melancholy fact that there are few things of which either nature or man is, as a rule, more lavish than human life;—provided always that the methods used in extinguishing it are customary and not unduly obtrusive on the sight and nerves. As a necessary consequence of this wastefulness, it follows also that the results which ordinarily flow from the extinguishment of the individual life are pitifully small. Any person curious to satisfy himself as to the truth of either or both of these propositions can do so easily enough by visiting those frequent haunts in which poverty and typhoid lurk in company; or yet more easily by a careful study of the weekly bills of mortality of any great city. Indeed, compared with the massive battalions daily sacrificed in the perpetual conflict which mankind seems forever doomed to wage against intemperance, bad sewerage and worse ventilation, the victims of regular warfare by sea and land count as but single spies. The worst of it is, too, that if the blood of the martyrs thus profusely spilled is at all the seed of