

**THE DOUBLE GAUGE
RAILWAY SYSTEM. DANGER
TO TRAVELLERS AND
INJURY TO SHAREHOLDERS**

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The Double Gauge Railway System. Danger to Travellers and Injury to Shareholders by Samuel Sidney

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SAMUEL SIDNEY

**THE DOUBLE GAUGE
RAILWAY SYSTEM. DANGER
TO TRAVELLERS AND
INJURY TO SHAREHOLDERS**

THE DOUBLE GAUGE RAILWAY SYSTEM.

DANGER TO TRAVELLERS

AND

INJURY TO SHAREHOLDERS,

THREATENED BY

A COMBINATION

OF THE

BROAD AND NARROW GAUGES.



PROVED BY THE EVIDENCE OF

STEPHENSON, LOCKE, AND BRUNEL.

By SAMUEL SIDNEY,

AUTHOR OF "THE RAILWAY SYSTEM ILLUSTRATED," &c. &c.

"Ce n'est pas seulement le courage, et l'intelligence, et l'activité,—c'est la sagesse et l'économie qui maintiennent la supériorité des productions et du commerce de son pays."—CHARLES DUPIN's *Force Commerciale de la Grande Bretagne*.

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INTRODUCTION.

In my pamphlet entitled "Speed on Railways Considered in a Commercial Point of View," I tried to show the heavy tax paid for the only successful part of the Broad Gauge system—Express Trains. In the following essay, I have collected all the evidence extant on the Double Gauge—a new and expensive addition, which our Parliament is taking every possible opportunity of adding to the already sufficiently expensive Broad Gauge system.

I do not claim any part with those philanthropists—like Mr. Morrison—the Robin Hoods of Railway Reform who propose, with cheap generosity, to commence robbing Railway Companies in order to bestow alms on Railway travellers. I believe that the best interests of the public are identified with the prosperity of these great carrying corporations: but I think it part of the duty of a wise Government not to permit public works to be constructed for the sole advantage of an exclusive class. To illustrate my meaning, I think daily trains for passengers, at $\frac{1}{2}d.$ a mile, a hundredfold more useful to the country than an increase of speed, which to the traveller paying $3d.$ would save a mile an hour in a journey of 200 miles. I think that to introduce into our agricultural districts, which will so soon be called upon to sustain a fearful competition with more fertile corn-growing countries, conveyance for their labour, and their produce, and their supplies, at as cheap a rate as in the North (where coal is conveyed at nine miles an hour for $\frac{1}{2}d.$ a ton), would be a practical boon, far outweighing the most luxurious Great Western Express, and far easier to attain than the re-enactment of Protection, or the repeal of the Malt-Tax. I have endeavoured to show how, led astray by

the fallacious expectations held out by the promoters of the Broad Gauge, we have advanced from one extravagance to another, until we find ourselves gravely contemplating an addition to our Railway system, which, without affording one single new advantage, must cost an additional 6,000*l.* a mile, and may cost 20,000*l.* a mile, engulfing at one fell swoop the simplicity, safety, economy, and efficiency, and, like a compromise at the end of a Chancery suit, leaving the shells for the shareholders and the public, while the lawyers and the engineers divide the oyster.

While these pages were passing through the press, a frightful accident, on the London and North-Western Railway, by which ten persons have lost their lives, has afforded melancholy proof of the "danger," which forms a leading feature in my title-page. A signal-man, labouring under some strange infatuation, turned the switches out of the main line into a siding, and sent a mail train, moving at a rapid rate, against a luggage train (*Times*, June 7).—Under the Mixed Gauge system, I have clearly proved that the probability of such accidents will be doubled, trebled, and even quadrupled.

The Cheltenham and Oxford line must be added to the list of those (provisionally) sanctioned on the Mixed Gauge system; and several of the projected Lines, given in my list, have been defeated. But these variations do not affect my conclusions.

Our legislators seem to be of opinion—contrary to the Reports of all Special Reports on the subject—that the public have nothing whatever to do with the cost of Railways; and this idea, *combined with the natural taste of amateur judges for anything in the shape of a compromise*, will probably continue to make the Mixed Gauge a favourite mode of settling Gauge contests, until some fearful calamity, in which a member of either House of Parliament loses life or limb; or the extravagant waste of capital consequent on grafting a

Broad Gauge line with a Narrow Gauge line, reduces the dividends of a promising speculation to zero, and devours the income of individuals sufficiently well connected to be pitied in their poverty by ministers of state.

Some persons may consider that I have expressed my opinion of the policy of the Great Western Company, and of the unscrupulous manner in which that policy has been forwarded by the chiefs and officers of that Company, in terms more plain than courteous. If it be so, I have a double justification. My proofs, from the recorded words of the parties arraigned, have preceded my conclusions; and the parties themselves have, in Parliament, at public meetings, and in print, spared no calumnious imputations and epithets, when it has been their interest to disparage either railway opponents or official arbitrators, not inclined to put implicit trust in the dissolving views of Mr. Brunel, and the poetical promises of Mr. Charles Alexander Saunders. It is scarcely twelve months since, at all Broad Gauge meetings, and in all Broad Gauge prints, Professors Airy and Barlow, and Sir F. Smith were held up as ignorant garblers of evidence, and unjust and corrupt judges.

Mr. Saunders never makes his appearance as a witness without giving the Committee to understand, that the Company he so zealously and ably represents is entirely actuated by public-spirited motives, quite independent of dividends, or anything connected with profits, and that the Company opposed to him is the incarnation of all that is selfish and money-grubbing; while every one who travels on, or sends goods by, the Great Western Railway knows that, except to first-class passengers and freighters of large cargoes of goods, the tariff of Broad Gauge Lines has hitherto been most oppressive; the conduct of all officials connected with it arbitrary and vexatious. It is, in fact, a gentleman's, not a poor man's railway; but by dint of praising themselves, libelling their opponents, and