

RAILWAYS AND THEIR EMPLOYEES

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Railways and their employees by Ossian D. Ashley

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OSSIAN D. ASHLEY

**RAILWAYS AND
THEIR EMPLOYEES**

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BY

OSSIAN D. ASHLEY

PRESIDENT OF THE WABASH RAILROAD CO.

CHICAGO

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INTRODUCTORY.

The series of papers which compose this little volume were published originally in "The Railway Age." The first chapter entitled "Railway Companies and Their Employees" was written as one of a series of articles contributed by railway officials, at the request of the "Age," without any intention on the part of the writer of continuing the subject. At the suggestion of the Editor, a second and third chapter followed, and the writer became interested in the progress of coöperative work, which he found had been far more successful than he had supposed. The gratifying results of these experiments seemed important enough to call for the publication of details which are not generally known. Hence the writer continued his investigations. This led naturally to an examination of "Socialism" and to a consideration of coöperation as a practical method of harmonizing the interests of employers and employed. Written, as these chapters have been, at intervals of a month or six weeks, the continuity of thought has been somewhat broken and the writer may have been led into repetitions which might have been avoided, had it been his

purpose to write a book at the outset. It would be difficult to rectify these imperfections now, without reconstructing the whole, and this explanation will, perhaps, furnish a sufficient excuse for such defects in the volume.

The author claims no originality for this work, but believes he has presented the matter in a more tangible shape for the consideration of those who take an interest in the subject. Coöperation in its various forms is, in the opinion of many who have studied the alleged grievances of "Socialism," the only effective and practical remedy available.

O. D. ASHLEY.

NEW YORK, August, 1895.

RAILWAYS AND THEIR EMPLOYEES.

CHAPTER I.

COÖPERATIVE EXPERIMENTS.

In questions of social economy which treat of the relations of capital and labor and of employers and employees, the most attractive theory perhaps is that which contemplates some method of coöperation between the two interests which will admit of a more equal distribution of the profits of labor which capital concentrates, directs and utilizes. Intelligent humanity looks upon the unequal distribution of wealth, which gives to half of the human race ease and comfort while the other half lives only by incessant toil or suffers in poverty, as an evil which should be corrected by any just process. Any movement therefore which supports this general proposition of improving the condition of the working classes by introducing methods of enabling labor to participate more actively and more liberally in the net profits of its production or of the result of its employment, meets with widespread sympathy and encouragement. Unhappily this beneficent policy, which is the legitimate outcome of liberty and popular government, has brought to the surface a large number of hot-headed and nar-