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RAILWAY FESTIVITY Nothing has caused a greater change in the social and commercial part of this country, in modern times, than the establishment of railways. Men of latent talent, that required only an opportunity for its development, rose into fame through the means of cutting and constructing railways and their requirements. One of such men was Stephenson. But the development of talent is but one of the least benefits that railways have conferred upon England. They have wrought great moral changes in the characters of those employed by inland carriers. Canals of late were the greatest facilities that were offered to the mercantile community for the transit of their goods. Six days were considered a very reasonable time to convey merchandise from Manchester to London; whereas, now, goods that were in the manufacturer's warehouse last night are in London today. The power of steam performs this. But how was it a few years back? Boats were used for this purpose, varying in tonnage, hauled by horses in the voyage between Manchester and London. The brutal cruelty of the drivers in whipping the poor animals forward, and the horrid oaths that almost accompanied every lash, can only be fully known to those who have been intimately connected with canal carrying. A more fearfully demoralised class of men than canal boatmen could not be found in England. Their occupation was a nursery of vice. The cabins of the boats contained three berths or bed places for the crew, who consisted of half a dozen males, the chief of whom were mostly accompanied by women, who frequently were females of infamous characters. Gross wickedness characterised these men, to whose custody were committed goods of all kinds and value. They were inveterate sheep stealers and poachers. A day of rest was unknown to them, except when a stoppage took place upon the canals for repairs. Then these holidays were spent in every species of available vice. The name of Jesus, except as an oath, was unknown to a number of them, and to divine service, as a religious worship, they were equally strangers. Being born the children of boatmen, they were employed in that capacity as soon as they had acquired sufficient physical strength to be useful; and although called Christians, they grew up and lived in a state of greater religious, moral and intellectual darkness than the poor heathen who "sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind". None seemed to care for their welfare, except here and there a good man would rise up and feel for them. Of this character was Mr Samuel Salt, now goods manager to the London and North Western Railway, London Road, Manchester, who still retains in his present high status the same regard for the happiness and welfare of all the persons employed under him in the carrying business. At his own cost, he has established for the use of those persons a library containing upwards of four hundred valuable books, treating upon history, philosophy, biography, travels, chemistry, &c, allowing a period of time for reading according to the nature and size of the book. We believe that none can be more anxious for his workmen's welfare than Mr Salt. But he is a strict disciplinarian, so that the whole establishment under his management is moved like one vast well regulated machine. Every year, he provides a social banquet for those employed under him, and on Saturday evening last, at seven o'clock, 180 persons sat down to dinner at Hayward's Hotel, Bridge Street. Mr Thomas Kay, the goods superintendent, presided, and Mr Adshead occupied the vice chair. After the enjoyment of good roast beef and plum pudding, Mr Kay proposed as the first toast, "The Queen, Prince Albert and the royal family", which was loyally responded to. The next toast was "The directors of the London and North Western Railway". He (Mr Kay) observed that the servants of that company, as well as the shareholders, were greatly indebted to the directors for the very successful manner in which they had conducted the affairs of the railway. Through many a storm and critical crisis, they had steered the good ship, safely guiding her past the shoals and quicksands, when the hurricane of speculation roared loudly and agitated the sea of railway commerce; but now she sailed steadily under a light breeze and spread sails, bringing every year a good and sure freight to the owners. But it could not be without great care and anxiety that the directors stood at the helm of the affairs of that company, which represented a capital, including loans, of thirty seven millions of pounds sterling, and a length of railway measuring five hundred and sixty miles. He would liken them to the governor bails of the steam engine, that regulate the working of the entire engine. It was the interest of all employed to work harmoniously with the directors, from the highest to the lowest servant in the

service, each party performing his duty honestly, faithfully and efficiently. He (Mr Kay) was glad to say that he believed such was the case with those whom he addressed, and trusted it ever would be so, as it was the surest means of promoting their individual welfare and happiness. The toast was drunk with applause. Mr H Spencer Harrison, superintendent of the passenger department, being called upon to reply on behalf of the directors, briefly returned thanks for the enthusiastic reception that the meeting had given the toast, stating further that, as the directors had great anxiety in promoting unity of purpose and harmonious feeling between and amongst the several grades of their officers and men, it would, had circumstances permitted, have been most highly gratifying to their feelings to have viewed from the spot where he (Mr Harrison) now stood, the full gathering of happy faces which he saw before him. The next toast was "The health of Samuel Salt Esq, goods manager". Mr Kay observed that it was almost useless for him to preface that toast with many words; they all knew Mr Salt. He was a gentleman of great experience in the carrying business, possessed sound judgment, and an unflinching integrity. If a man did his duty he was sure of certain employment, and advancement according to his ability and service. He was also a gentleman of a kind, humane heart, which never ceased to feel for the happiness and welfare of all persons employed under him, and had not indisposition prevented arising from a severe cold, he would have been amongst them that evening. The health of Mr Salt, Mrs Salt, and family, was drunk with much applause. Song, "The Old English Gentleman" by Mr Evans, performed with much taste and ability. Mr Adshead responded to the health of Mr Salt, and observed how cheering it would have been for Mr Salt to look upon so many happy faces, and behold such unity, kindness and goodwill. He would, from the grounds of his heart, have wished them a "happy new year". How good and pleasant was it for friends to work together in unity; how delightful to themselves, and satisfactory to the employers. That meeting was composed of different members, but of the same body of which Mr Salt was the head. None could injure another without injuring himself. Let not the head despise the foot, nor the body disrespect the head; but let the blood of unity and goodwill circulate through this body commercial, and all would be happy, healthy and well. On behalf of Mr Salt, his kind lady, and family, he (Mr Adshead) begged to tender to the meeting his hearty thanks for their goodwill. The next toasts were "Prosperity to trade and commerce", "Success to railways, especially the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway", "The ladies", "The workmen", to which Mr Platt of Macclesfield, Mr Lees and Mr Mooney of Huddersfield, Mr Evans, Mr Helm and Mr Spencer Harrison of Manchester, made suitable replies. The healths of the president and vice president were drunk, after which "God save the Queen" was sung, and the meeting separated, well pleased with the evening's entertainment.