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RAILWAY
BOOK**





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A WORD AT STARTING



ONLY a few years before MR. PUNCH began his long and brilliant career had passenger trains and a regular system of railway travelling come into existence. In his early days it was still very much of a novelty to undertake a journey of any length by train; a delightful uncertainty prevailed not only as to the arrival at a given destination, but equally as to getting away from a starting-place. Naturally, the pens and pencils of his clever contributors were then frequently in use to illustrate the humours of railway travel, and even down to the present time Mr. PUNCH has not failed to find in the railway and its associations "a source of innocent merriment."

It must be admitted that some thirty years ago the pages of PUNCH literally teemed with biting satires on the management of our railways, and the fact that his whole-hearted denunciations of the inefficient service, the carelessness which resulted in frequent accidents, the excessive charges, the inadequate accommodation, could have been allowed to pass without numerous actions for libel, is proof of the enormous advantages which the present generation

Mr. Punch's Railway Book

enjoys in this great matter of comfortable, rapid and inexpensive transit. Where MR. PUNCH in his wrath, as voicing the opinion of the public, was wont to ridicule and condemn the railways and all associated therewith, we to-day are as ready, and with equal reason, to raise our voice in praise. But ridicule is ever a stronger impulse to wit than is appreciation, and in these later days when we are all alive to the abounding merits of our railway system MR. PUNCH has had less to say about it. If we were to cull from his pages written in the days of his wrath we might be held guilty of presenting a gross travesty of the conditions now obtaining. Thus it is that in one or two cases only have we retained passages from his earlier chronicles, such as "Rules for the Rail" and "The Third-Class Traveller's Petition," which have some historical value as reminders that the railway comfort of the present day presents a remarkable contrast to the not very distant past.

To-day every member of the community may be regarded as a railway traveller, so large a part does the railway play in modern life ; and it will be admitted that, with all our improvements, the element of humour has not been eliminated from our comings and goings by train. We trust it never may. Here, then, is a compilation of the "best things," literary and pictorial, that have appeared in MR. PUNCH's pages on the subject, and with his cheery presence as our guard, let us set forth upon our excursion into the Realm of Fun !

MR. PUNCH'S RAILWAY BOOK

RAILWAY JOKES

As Played Daily on the Principal Lines

Turning Business into Pleasure.—Take a traveller pressed for time, and induce him to enter a train supposed to be in correspondence with another train belonging to another line, and by which other train the traveller proposes to proceed to his destination. As the first train arrives at the junction, start off the second train *en route* for Town. The dismay of the traveller when he finds his journey interrupted will be, to say the least, most mirth-moving.

The Panic-stricken Passengers.—Allow an express train to arrive at the station of a rival company two hours behind its time. The travellers will, of course, be anxious to learn the cause of the delay, and will (again of course) receive no sort of

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"Half third return to Brixton, please."

"Half! What's your age?"

"I'm thirteen at home; but I'm only nine and a half on railways."

Stay where you are for half an hour, whistling and letting off steam every now and then, to increase the excitement. Should it be known in the train that an express is due on the line of rails already

information on the subject from the servants of the rival company. Should there be any nervous ladies in the train, the fun will become fast and furious.

A Lark in the Dark.—Start a train ten minutes late, and gradually lose time until it arrives in the middle of a long tunnel, and then stop the engine.



Friend (to minor railway official at provincial station)
"Ullo, Cocky, where 'ave you been all this time?"

Minor R. O. (with dignity). "Oh, I 'ad to go up on duty for the Naval Review at Spit'ead, I 'ad."

Friend (impressed). "Ah! Fine sight I expect it wur?"

Minor R. O. "Well, I can't say as I saw much of it. I war a taking the tickets at Vaux'all!"