

nearly always on the *left side*, and many examples can be produced where it is placed sometimes on the right sometimes on the left. If a semaphore is a warning or a guide to an engine driver he ought to have some uniformity of practice to guide him. The night danger signal is always red, the day danger signal should be likewise uniform.

The question of guard rails which is now so much agitated is a curious revival of a disused custom. About 25 years ago, they were uniformly adopted on bridges and viaducts on the great Scotch Trunk lines; after a few years they fell into disuse as they were looked upon as a source of danger to the wheel. Since the Tay bridge accident they have come into use again, and are placed on the new bridge but not near the rail.

The numerous cases of wheels leaving the rail, and at the points (or switches) in particular, which have been reported this winter, call for some amendment to the present system. The Engineering journals are full of advertisements of switch and signal locking apparatus, but the employment of them does not seem to find favor. It is to be hoped some member whose work lies particularly in track maintenance will now, or in a future paper, give the Society information on these important points. A train should have no difficulty in running through a properly set and guarded "facing point." Hundreds of trains do this daily in Britain.

Many of the other points referring to accidents could be dealt with if there were an organization similar to the English Railway department of the Board of Trade, with officials having the power to compel railway companies to carry out their orders.

On one point he disagreed with the essayist, that of making city and municipal corporations bear the greater share of the cost of forming and watching level crossings and of constructing bridges in cities. He says: "A railway is now rather to be regarded as a greater factor in the public convenience and in the national prosperity, than as a means through which private individuals may be enriched." Such being the case, when a railway helps to build up a city, it in turn builds up the railway. If a railway crosses a street which has been established before the advent of the railway, and in consequence of increased traffic both on railway and street, the public safety is endangered; or if a company has a bridge which has long failed to meet the demands of street traffic passing over it, it is the province of the railway to increase the accommodation of the bridge, and in the case of a level crossing to provide a suitable safe means of traverse. This rule is enforced in Britain where railways are worked as purely commercial enterprises for the profit of the shareholders. The companies are compelled to put up bridges over level crossings, and provide other safeguards for the public