

sands every day. It seems as if, with the growth of railway traffic and the increase of railway speed, the train hands and switchmen grow less careful instead of more so. The word "accident," as applied to a railway horror like some of those terrible recent occurrences on railways, can no longer retain that shade of meaning which connects it with *chance*. They are horrid casualties, largely caused by faults in men. How can such faults be punished?—or rather, how can such faults be eradicated?

The frightful mortality every year on the railways of the United States—and to a large extent on those of this country as well—is causing people to believe that many of these causes of violent death should no longer be, as they used to be, attributed to a "visitation of Providence," but to some intrinsic carelessness on the part of railway men themselves. That such people are not far wrong is admitted even by such a thorough-going railroad man as Mr. J. J. Hill is evidenced in the following words: "A careful examination of railway accidents will show beyond question that three-quarters or seven-eighths of them are due to disregard of well-established rules which experience has shown would prevent accidents. Until the public realizes its own danger from the neglect of those whose duty it is to protect the trains by carefully observing the rules made for the preservation of human life, and without which it is in the greatest danger, there will be no relief from the liability to accident. The enormous growth of railway mileage has greatly increased the number of employees, among whom will be found many of the most skilful and careful men in railway service. However, the difficulty of enforcing discipline and the careless familiarity with which men take not only their own lives but the lives of trainloads of passengers into danger, will not be prevented until those who are responsible through criminal neglect are punished criminally." These are strong words, but the authority of their utterer should give them peculiar weight. Certainly something needs to be done beyond merely regretting.

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#### THE WHEAT CROP IN THE FAR WEST.

The favorable result of another year's harvest to the farmer in the Canadian North-West is pretty well established by this time. Our correspondent at Winnipeg sends us the following at noon yesterday: "The weather during the past week has been generally favorable for threshing in the West and good progress has been made, about seventy-five per cent. being completed. The returns indicate that the crop will be larger than last year, but the grade lower; which conditions will, however, be more than offset by prevailing high prices."

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#### THE FRUIT TRADE.

A brief retrospect of the Canadian fruit trade for the year now closing will at this stage be in order. The season, it will be remembered, opened most inauspiciously. A long, almost unprecedentedly severe winter was succeeded by a backward spring and a cool, moist summer. Many were the fears expressed, on account not only of the effect upon the trees, but

upon the quality and quantity of such fruit as might come to maturity. In one respect, unfortunately, these fears were well-grounded, for thousands of trees, even on the Niagara Peninsula, Ontario's warm belt, were either winter-killed or almost irreparably damaged by weather. Blocks of peach trees of a thousand or more were in some cases completely destroyed. The forecast of an absolute peach famine, however, happily proved groundless, for the crop of that luscious fruit, while smaller than usual, turned out much better than expected, both in total and quality. The growers, too, reaped the benefit of enhanced prices for their peaches. In fact, it may be said that, taken as a whole, the season was a satisfactory one, both to growers and dealers, the general high range of steady values having atoned, or very nearly so, for any decline in extent of the harvest. Strawberries were in some sections very scanty, and prices kept to a good level throughout. Plums were one feature, however, which were uniformly of poor yield, but prices very high.

With regard to apples, the reports have been of a very conflicting nature. The crops of summer and fall varieties were, as a rule, good throughout most sections of Ontario. For the later or winter apples, however, the different districts report very different yields. Insect pests have been fewer than usual. Taking the country as a whole, the crop in Ontario may be described as fair—very good, in fact, when last year's bumper crop is taken into consideration. Quebec's crop of Fameuses apples seems likely to prove considerably better than was anticipated some few weeks ago. In Nova Scotia the yield is said to be very good. It is unfortunate, in a selfish sense, so far as Canadian apple growers are concerned that, with a good crop themselves, they find the United States as well as Great Britain and some continental countries also reporting good yields, which keeps the market price very low. A month ago, in consequence of this, buyers were offering very low prices for orchards here, and, though these have improved somewhat of late, growers are even now able to obtain, comparatively speaking, but little for their product. There can be little doubt, however, that improved business methods and a system of co-operation would greatly ameliorate this condition, a fact which is becoming more and more recognized with each year. Recent reports from the Old Country say the market is improving, especially for highly-colored fruit.

British Columbia is surely forging ahead as a successful fruit-growing country. Thousands of acres in the Okanagan and other regions of that Province have been set out during the last few years, and the product, in quantity and grade, compares very favorably with that of other places. Manitoba and the North-West present an attractive and growingly large field for the marketing of this fruit, especially as they have in the past been largely dependent on that from California orchards. Ontario should also, no doubt, be able to dispose of much of its surplus in these rising markets, but this is an opportunity which has been to some extent neglected, and much of the fruit which has actually gone thence has not been packed in an attractive style. Recent concessions on the part of the railroads should help to bring about a better state of affairs in the fruit trade.