

# NOTABLE RAILWAY STATIONS

No. 20.—PRESTON (Joint) L. & Y. and L. & N.W. Rys.

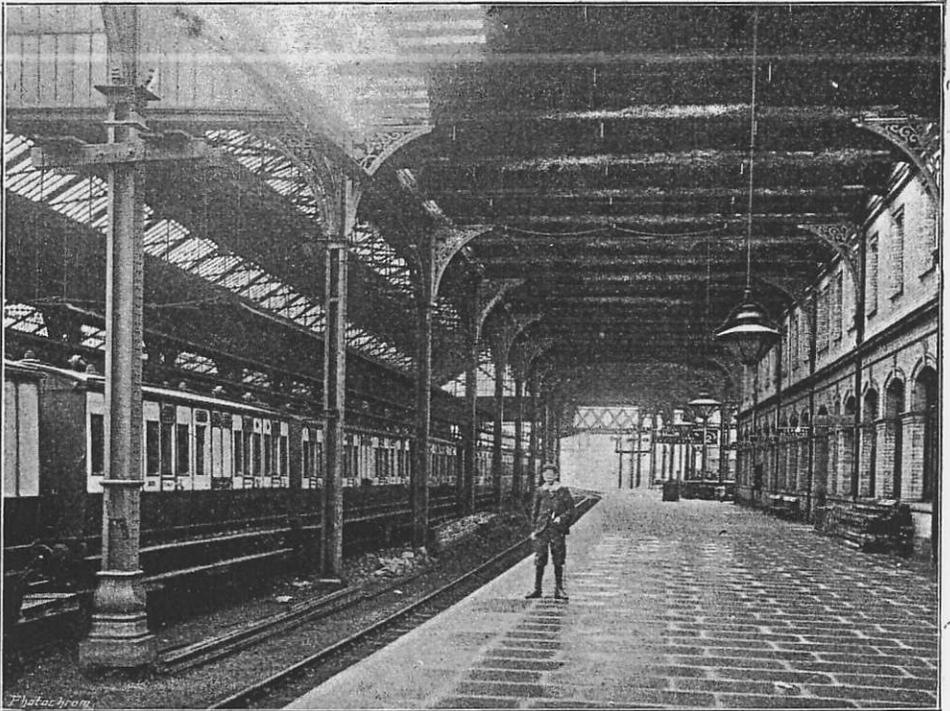
By J. L. LAWRENCE, M.A.



VISITORS to the recent Merchant Guild—a very ancient festival which is held in Preston under an old charter every twenty years—found themselves confronted, wherever they turned, by the device “P.P.”

This device, it was explained, stood for “Proud Preston.” Why the Prestonians should be credited with the exclusive haughtiness which is to be

inferred from this appellation it is hard to say. As far as the present is concerned, the town has no especial claims to greatness, either political or commercial. In coaching days it occupied an important position as a centre of traffic, both passenger and postal, and now that the railway has superseded the road, that importance is still maintained. If Preston has nothing else of which to be proud, it is entitled to be proud of its railway station, for probably no similar



Photo

A VIEW OF No. 2 PLATFORM, PRESTON STATION.

[E. P. Carlwell.]

structure in England can compete with it, either for comfort or convenience, or even as to its size.

Its position in the railway system of the country is analogous to that of York, in that it is a great distributing centre. But there is one important distinction. York Station affords hospitality to the rolling stock of no less than seven railway companies; whereas the conservatism of Preston extends even to its station, and whilst possibly foreign vehicles may have found their way into its precincts, the writer has never heard of any foreign locomotive venturing there.

It is 209 miles from London, 191 from Edinburgh, 31 from Manchester,  $28\frac{1}{4}$  from Liverpool, and 103 from Birmingham. It is thus a sort of halfway house between England and Scotland. Whilst the London and North-Western Railway's main line runs through, due north and south, looking neither to the right hand nor the left, the lines of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway approach it and leave it in all directions.

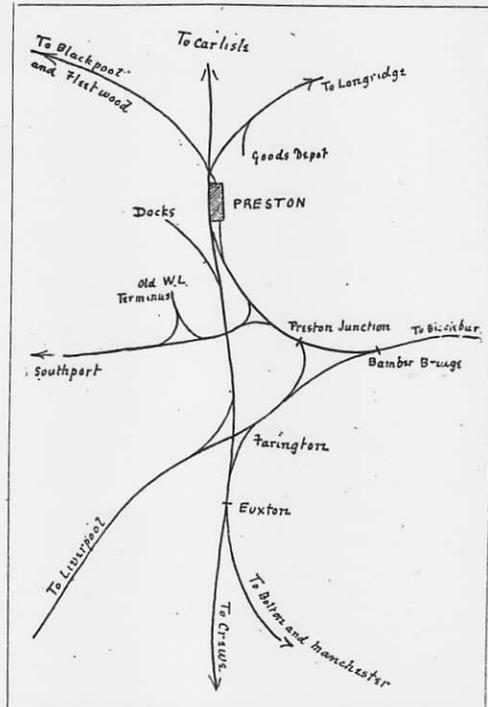
As far as the former company is concerned, the objectives are London and Carlisle, a hand being held out to Liverpool and Manchester at Wigan,  $15\frac{1}{4}$  miles to the south. But both of these towns are more readily reached by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, which goes to Liverpool via Ormskirk, and to Manchester via Bolton and via Atherton. The same company reaches Southport by two routes, the one being their original one by way of Burscough, and the other over the West Lancashire line, now the property of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

The line from Blackburn and Yorkshire completes the approaches from the south. On the north the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway objectives are Blackpool and Fleetwood. To the former there are alternative routes, via Lytham and via Poulton, and a third is promised, being a short cut via Kirkham.

The only branch line pure and simple from Preston is that to Longridge. This little line penetrates into the fells

which abound in mid-Lancashire, and it needs no great skill in prophecy to predict that in time to come it will be extended to Clitheroe, and thus be linked with the Midland system via Hellfield, affording an alternative route into Yorkshire.

It is no detraction from the town's commercial importance to suggest that the greater part of the railway traffic is of the "through" description, and



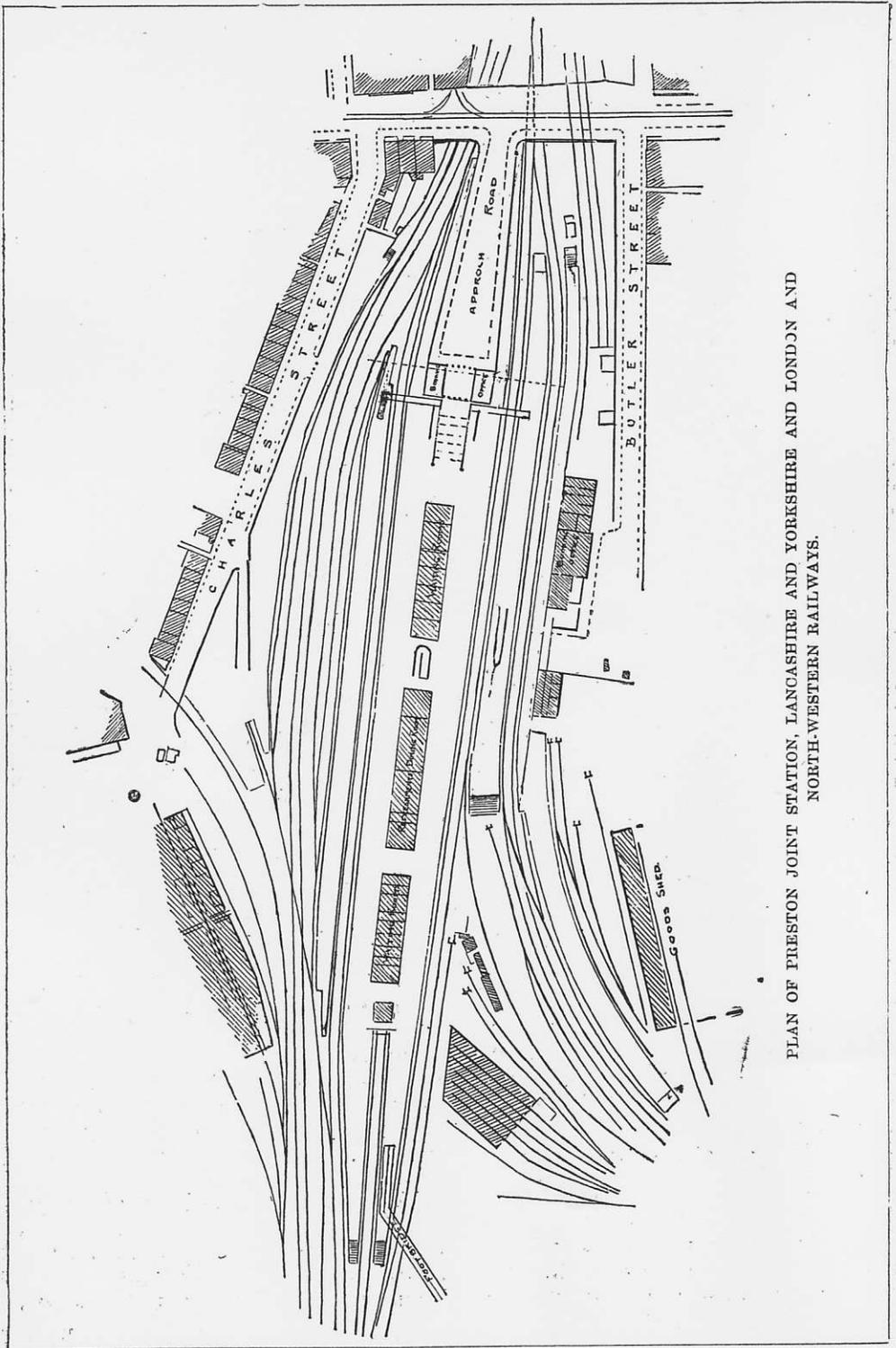
MAP OF THE RAILWAYS IN THE VICINITY OF PRESTON.

most of the trains using the station are long distance.

The main line to the south comprises four tracks as far as Euxton,  $6\frac{1}{4}$  miles distant. As far as this, the line is used by both companies, but from that point the line to Bolton and Manchester branches off to the east.

The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway's Liverpool trains in some cases use the same metals, leaving the main line at Farington,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles distant.

The line to Blackpool, known as the



PLAN OF PRESTON JOINT STATION, LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE AND LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAYS.

Preston and Wyre Railway, is used by both companies.

Preston Station is really two stations, although to the uninitiated public there seems to be but one. Platforms 1 to 6 constitute a joint territory, and the staff serves both Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway and London and North-Western Railway traffic. Platforms 7, 8 and 9, together with several bays, form what is now and then called Butler Street Station, and it is exclusively Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway property and manned by a Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway staff. Mr. Barlow is the chief of the former, and Mr. Bridson of the latter. We have the pleasure to reproduce a photograph of the latter gentleman. Platforms 1 and 2 are not yet open to the public, although they were used to contend with the exceptional traffic of the Guild week.

The present station was built about twenty-two years ago, and took the place of a much inferior structure.

The ground plan, shown on page 138, does not show the extension on the west side which is referred to further on. The alterations necessarily involve an extension of the footbridge, which is therefore longer than shown.

The dimensions of Preston Station are imposing. The length of the chief platform is 1,225ft., and its width is 110ft. The space occupied by the station buildings reduces this width in places to from 35ft. to 40ft. The platform area is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  acres, and the covered area  $6\frac{3}{4}$  acres. What this means can be best appreciated by comparing it with some other well-known stations. The platforms at Paddington are from 800ft. to 850ft. in length and 28ft. broad. At St. Pancras the corresponding dimensions are 770ft. and 25ft. At King's Cross, 990ft. and 25ft. The length of the longest platform at Liverpool Street is 900ft., and at Waterloo it is 850ft. with a maximum breadth of 30ft.

In fact, one of the officials at Preston suggested to the writer that the main platform would make an ideal track for cycle races.

Of the total length of 1,225ft. the

refreshment rooms and other offices take up 575ft., and they are in three blocks. At the north end are the commodious waiting rooms and sundry offices, then come the refreshment rooms, over which is the post office, and at the south end are other waiting rooms and offices.

The booking hall at the entrance to the station is illustrated on page 141. It is reached by the approach from Fishergate. On leaving this we pass through the gates at which tickets are collected, and then a foot bridge stretches right and left, traversing the whole station. A broad and



MR. T. BRIDSON,

Lancashire and Yorkshire Stationmaster, Preston.

easy slope leads on to the platform. Besides the foot bridge there are two subways, one for passengers and the other for their luggage. In one respect the station fails to come up to modern requirements, in that it has to depend for its light on gas, and, moreover, with the old-fashioned burners. We cannot have everything, however, and in some respects the proud Prestonians stand by the old order. Are not some of the best residential streets paved with "petrified potatoes"?

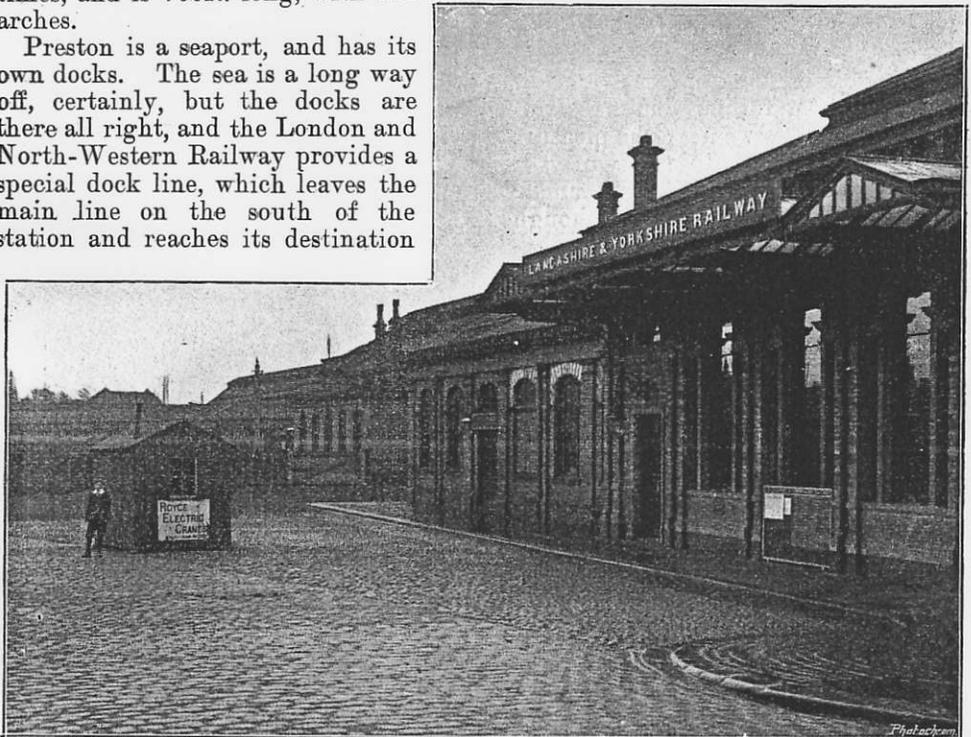
The main line platforms are nine in

number, but to arrive at the full accommodation we must add that which is provided by the several docks or bays; and we have then no less than fifteen "quays," in addition to a platform specially intended for dealing with horses and carriages.

The approach from the south—that is from Warrington—affords an excellent view of the town. The line is on a viaduct, which has been enlarged three times, and is 700ft. long, with five arches.

Preston is a seaport, and has its own docks. The sea is a long way off, certainly, but the docks are there all right, and the London and North-Western Railway provides a special dock line, which leaves the main line on the south of the station and reaches its destination

tion it comprised seven carriages, six heavy West Coast sleepers, and a composite, all of them running on four-wheeled steel-framed bogies. Two engines were drawing it, Vulcan (No. 275) being the train engine, and Shark (No. 2159) the pilot. Both of these were six wheeled, and they ran through Preston at a speed which some witnesses at the enquiry estimated to be nearly 50 miles an hour. At all events, it was



(Photo)

EXTERIOR OF LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY OFFICES, PRESTON STATION.

[E. P. Cardwell.]

by means of a bank of 1 in 27 and a curve of eight chains radius.

On July 13, 1896, a very serious accident occurred in the station yard. The 8 p.m. from Euston—the train which occupied so large a place in the public imagination during the preceding summer—was timed to run from Wigan to Carlisle without stopping, the time allowed for the 105½ miles being 112 minutes. On the occasion in ques-

admitted that the speed considerably exceeded the ten-mile limit prescribed. At the north end of the station was a very sharp curve, and in taking this the train was derailed, and one death was the result. Whilst the undue speed at this particular point undoubtedly contributed to the disaster, the technical Press had something to say on the absence of leading bogies, a peculiarity of construction in which Mr. Webb has

found very few imitators. One immediate result of the accident was the deceleration of the train, and a secondary result was the re-alignment of that portion of the permanent way on which the derailment occurred. This was accomplished by the purchase of a large amount of property on the north-west side of the station, including a whole street; and the land thus acquired served for the extension of the passenger station and for enlarging the curves to a radius of 15 chains.

The new accommodation comprises

prising amount of Yorkshire traffic comes through Preston en route for Morecambe. It consists largely of trippers from Batley and Dewsbury and neighbouring towns, to whom the companies hold out special inducements in the way of through trains and cheap fares.

Morecambe is exploited not only for its own attractions, but because it is a favourite way to the Lake district, the shortest way to Grange lying across the bay.

The Blackpool traffic is a marvel.



Photo] EXTERIOR OF THE (FISHERGATE) LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN [E. P. Cardwell.  
RAILWAY BOOKING OFFICE, PRESTON STATION.

three new platforms, two for passenger service and one for dealing with horses and carriages. This extension will probably not be officially open till the spring of 1903, and it will then relieve the congestion caused by the pleasure traffic.

At times this threatens to become serious, for there are not only Blackpool and Morecambe to be considered, but the Lake district, and passengers for these resorts converge at Preston from all parts of England and Wales. A sur-

During the past summer the service to this notable watering place was provided for by no less than forty-seven trains every day, five of these being run by the London and North-Western Railway; and even in the winter the trains number thirty-six. And there are in addition the non-stopping expresses and the specials. On one given day nearly 180 special and ordinary trains arrived at Blackpool, and 150 of these would pass through Preston. As the great majority of these

would return the way they came, it means that more than 300 Blackpool trains were dealt with. The Blackpool "trip," and the lordly London and North-Western Railway 'grouse special,' represent probably the antipodes of railway travel, and Preston gets them both. Ordinarily the total number of trains dealt with in the summer is 442, made up of 136 Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway departures and 150 arrivals, and 79 London and North-Western Railway departures and

needs to have been there to properly appreciate the scene that used to be enacted between 2 and 3 o'clock every day in July and August. The impetuous charge of hungry passengers endeavouring to get through half-a-crown's worth of food in 20 minutes and scalding their throats with hot soup in the process, was a sight in itself worth seeing, but most to be admired was the perfection of the arrangements made for dealing with such a high pressure. No one ever saw a Preston railway official flurried. The



Photo]

THE NEW No. 1 PLATFORM, PRESTON STATION.

[E. P. Cardwell

77 arrivals. In the winter the departures are 193 and arrivals 191.

The glory of the refreshment rooms has to some extent departed. Before dining-car trains were the rule the principal up and down Scotch expresses were timed to arrive at Preston at about the same hour. The Edinburgh and Glasgow train leaving Euston at 10 arrived at 2.20, the Perth express leaving at 10.30 came in at 2.50, and the corresponding up trains were due at 2.5 and 2.20. One

waitresses are the pink of courtesy, and overflowing with attention, and absolutely indifferent to tips; the porters brimful of information, and knowing with exactitude whence and at what time, and whither bound, every train started; luggage treated as tenderly and with as much solicitude as if every item were a first-class passenger—all these are recollections that make Preston a grateful memory to the passenger. Now, alas! this is changed. We do not mean,

of course, that the courtesy and the attention and the discipline have changed, but we fancy that many a sigh is heaved when some stately "Scotchman," made up of corridor coaches and dining-cars, and drawn by two engines, flits through, and not one of the two or three hundred passengers deigns to look at the station. Non-stopping trains are officially supposed to crawl through at the rate of 10 miles an hour, but we might remark in this connection that motor cars are also

result of the gradual growth of the railway system. The several routes do not, however, compete with one another aggressively.

Preston Junction is a sort of under-study to the chief station. At all events, it saves it from what might be, at certain hours of the day, a congestion of traffic. It serves as the exchange station for passengers between East and West Lancashire, and thus not only saves congestion on the platform, but also on the



Photo, A. Winter]

No. 6 PLATFORM, PRESTON. LOOKING NORTH.

[Preston.

supposed to travel, only 2 miles an hour faster. The train has this advantage over the motor-car, in that there is no official with a stop-watch stationed at the end of the platform, and it is impossible to say, therefore, whether practice conforms to precept.

In our description of Preston as a railway centre, it will have been noticed that to most places alternative routes exist. This is, of course, a necessary

metals, inasmuch as the train from Preston to Liverpool, say, need not wait for that from Burnley and Accrington, but gets away some 5 or 10 minutes before the latter is due, and thus leaves the dock free for the incoming train. It also serves as the exchange station for Southport, inasmuch as when the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway bought up the West Lancashire Railway, they left the old terminus on the south side of the river,

and, running under the London and North-Western Railway, joined the line from Blackburn by two curves, north into Preston Station, and south into Preston Junction.

Preston has not much suburban traffic of the residential type, but the greater part of what there is has been developed on this particular line.

The accommodation even of Preston was taxed to the utmost during the interesting festival known as the Merchant Guild. For a whole week Preston was *en fête* and the town was one seething mass of humanity.

Whether the railway people sent for the Doncaster officials to give them some hints born of an annual St. Leger experience, the writer is not aware, but nothing could have been better done. The only way of dealing with the increased traffic was by insisting upon absolute punctuality, and once this idea had taken root and germinated in the mind of every railway servant concerned, the rest was easy. Everything went like clockwork. Trains arrived and got away with absolute adherence to time-table promise, and no mishap of any kind occurred. Some exceptional arrangements were, of course, made. The Longridge trains had to make Deepdale, the first station out, their terminus for the time being. The old West Lancashire Station, now only used for goods, was once more opened for passenger trains, and the two new platforms in the joint station were temporarily requisitioned. It is noteworthy that there were no excursion fares into Preston, but that all visitors had to pay ordinary fares. This was the only feature of the arrangements that failed to command universal approval.

We must not omit to mention the postal department. As at Crewe, there is a branch of the G.P.O. located within the station. The chief office in the town is concerned with office and counter work, but all the sorting is done at the station in a very commodious suite of rooms situated above the refreshment rooms. At one end of the suite, the chief of the staff, Mr. Edwards, has

his little office, which reminds one somewhat of a pulpit, designed thus, doubtless, to allow him to command a bird's-eye view of the whole establishment. Something like 1,200 letter bags and parcel post baskets pass through in the twenty-four hours, but this number conveys little idea of the work really got through.

A bag comes in, say, from Kendal, labelled Preston. It is emptied, and is found to contain letters for some fifty different towns and villages, and these have to be sorted, and the similar contents of hundreds of other bags are added in their proper order, and then in due course what to the outsider seemed to be irredeemable chaos, becomes order, and some 400 bags have been emptied and re-sorted and their contents sent off to their proper destinations.

High pressure in the postal department begins with the arrival of the up "limited," at 10.42, and things reach a crisis at 11.25, when the up postal special comes in. The latter conveys for the most part parcels. About an hour later the down trains begin to come in, and then the work recommences. Special departments of the office are set apart for dealing with letters and newspapers. Just as there are some people of perverted mind who enjoy a railway journey all the more if they have been able to accomplish it without the formality of purchasing a ticket, so there are so-called newspapers which necessitate the employment of a special detective staff in the Post Office.

The railway staff at Preston Station is numerous. On the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway side there are 101 employees. In the joint station there are seventy-eight employed on the platforms, including collectors, porters, lampmen, etc.; twenty-nine in the parcel office, including vanmen; ten in the booking office; and there are besides the signalmen, probably forty in number, who man eleven cabins, and the telegraphists. The total will be about 270. Certainly, therefore, Preston is a "Notable Railway Station."