

handled by men of so little education as in railroading. Grammar school graduates among railroad employes are not common, high school graduates are rare, and college graduates are almost unknown, excepting in the strictly technical departments. Years ago a lawyer with quick tongue, or even a newspaper man of natural ability, made striking successes with little thanks to the educational opportunities of the country. At the present time journalism and law demand not only the most brilliant but the best educated men that the universities produce. In the sixties and seventies farmers in the rich river bottoms of the West accumulated wealth under the most indifferent management. Now the strictest economy is everywhere necessary to dig a living from the soil, and farmers are beginning to send their boys to agricultural colleges, realizing that it takes brains to make their profession pay. When railroads were fewer and competition less, extravagant operation and numberless accidents did not materially lessen their fat dividends. But the state of abnormal prosperity which we are fond of calling the "good old times" has faded into a matter-of-fact present, and "brains or failure" is now the inscription upon the money-getter's future-pointing guideboard.

The pioneer railroad company to grasp this idea is the Illinois Central, which has entered upon a system of track apprenticeships destined in a few years to fill their executive positions with liberally educated men. Every college graduate in engineering lines who applies for a position with the Illinois Central Company is met with the proposition to begin at the bottom and work up. This system went into effect in May this year, and already a considerable number of graduate engineers have entered the service. The discipline is rigid, and to the more æsthetic youth unpleasant; but the young man who has the determination and earnestness which future successes require will not be deterred by this prospect. First he is sent out on the line to work on the section at a dollar and a quarter a day. Here he is subject to the same discipline as the common laborer, but is given every opportunity to learn his new business. When the commonest of track details have been mastered, the apprentice is advanced, as opportunity offers and his industry merits, to the position of section foreman at forty or fifty dollars a month. From this position of enlarged scope he is promoted, when proficient, to be supervisor, when he will receive one hundred to one hundred and twenty-five dollars