



THREE railroad Presidents met casually in one of the up-town hotels in this city a day or two after the death of Frank Thomson, and one of them asked: "Who is most likely to succeed to the Presidency of the Pennsylvania Railroad?"

"A. J. Cassatt," promptly replied another of the party, himself the President of one of the Eastern trunk lines.

"Why do you think so?" queried the first speaker.

"Because he is the best man available for the place," was the reply. "He is the only man who knows all about every part of the Pennsylvania system. He is both financier and operating man. No person understands better than he the financial condition and policy of the Pennsylvania Road, and no man is more familiar with the details of the management. Why, there is scarcely a man of any consequence in the employ of the company that Cassatt does not know personally. He is a strong man, and I have no doubt the Directors will offer him the Presidency."

The fitness of Mr. Cassatt for the responsible place to which he has just been called is conceded by all who know the man and who have an intelligent idea of the scope of the Pennsylvania Railroad Presidency. Some of his friends were of the opinion that he would decline to assume the burden of work and anxiety which bore down, successively, George B. Roberts and Frank Thomson. Mr. Cassatt is a man of wealth, independence, and social prominence. He is fond of the comfort and enjoyments which wealth enables its possessors to enjoy, and it was only a few years ago that he voluntarily retired from the post of First Vice President of the Pennsylvania system because the work had become too exacting. In his letter of resignation at that time he said: "My only object in taking this step is to have more time at my disposal than any one occupying so responsible a position in railroad management can command."

In overcoming Mr. Cassatt's reluctance to take up again the exacting work of responsible management, the Pennsylvania Directors have certainly done well. They have put into the Presidency one whom J. Edgar Thomson, Col. Thomas A. Scott, and George B. Roberts regarded as a remarkably capable executive man. In recent years Mr. Cassatt has held the comparatively easy Presidency of the New York, Philadelphia and Norfolk Railroad, which he helped to organize and build. This road extends from Delmar, the southern terminus of the Delaware division of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad, to Cape Charles, Va., thence by steam transport to Old Point Comfort and Norfolk. Even since his resignation as Vice President of the Pennsylvania system Mr. Cassatt has had an influential voice in the management of that system by virtue of his membership of the Board of Directors.

Alexander Johnston Cassatt was born in Pittsburg Dec. 8, 1839. He is the son of Robert S. Cassatt, who was the first Mayor of Allegheny City, and was for many years actively identified with the industrial interests of Western Pennsylvania. The elder Cassatt established the banking house of Lloyd, Cassatt & Co. in Philadelphia, and was its controlling spirit for a long period. After obtaining a modest educational start in the common schools of Pittsburg, A. J. Cassatt went to Europe with his father, who subsequently made his residence there. Young Cassatt enjoyed all of the advantages that the best educational institutions on the Continent afforded. He studied in France and took a course in the University at Heidelberg. Returning to this country he took a full course at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, from which institution he was graduated in 1859 as a civil engineer. His first engagement in his chosen profession was in connection with the location and construction of a railroad line in Georgia. He discontinued this work just before the outbreak of the civil war and settled in Philadelphia. In 1861 he was appointed a rodman on the Philadelphia division of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and a year or two afterward he was assigned to the engineer corps, which was intrusted with the work of constructing a connecting railway linking the Philadelphia and Trenton to the Pennsylvania.

From the start the young engineer developed ability of an uncommon order. His capacity for work was phenomenal. No task was too difficult for him to undertake, and he appeared not to know the meaning of the word failure. He speedily won the title of assistant engineer, and under the watchful eye of Col. Scott he was advanced steadily. When the Pennsylvania Company assumed control of the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad in 1864 Mr. Cassatt was appointed resident engineer of the Middle Division, with headquarters at Renovo. Not long afterward a Manager was wanted for the Warren and Franklin Railroad, which had been built as the main outlet of the oil regions to the seaboard. It was Col. Scott who selected Mr. Cassatt for this position, and so ably did the young Manager discharge his duties that an enormous volume of traffic was passed over the new road without a hitch.

As he advanced in the service Mr. Cassatt made it a point to learn thoroughly every detail of the department over which he had control. One day Col. Scott called in person at the office of the Manager of the Warren and Franklin Railroad, and asked for some information which naturally would come from the bookkeeping department. Mr. Cassatt told him just what he wanted to know tersely and accurately without consulting the bookkeeper.

"How did you happen to know this, Mr. Cassatt?" asked Col. Scott.

"Oh, I look over the books every few

days," replied the General Manager. "I would not want to be left in the lurch in the event of my bookkeeping department suddenly becoming disabled."

"Umph! not a bad idea," gravely remarked the tireless Scott as he walked away.

In April, 1866, five years after he entered the employ of the Pennsylvania Road, Mr. Cassatt was appointed Superintendent of Motive Power and Machinery of the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad, with his office in Williamsport. Here he scored a notable success which strengthened him still more in the estimation of his superior officers. Within a year and a half he was transferred to Altoona as Superintendent of Motive Power and Machinery of the Pennsylvania Road, and three years later, when Edward H. Williams resigned as General Superintendent, Mr. Cassatt was selected to take his place. When the United Railroads of New Jersey became part of the Pennsylvania system Mr. Cassatt was made General Manager of all the Pennsylvania lines, being the first person to hold that office. His genius for administrative work developed conspicuously from this time on, and to his farsightedness and facility of organization were due in large measure the systematic welding together of the Eastern lines in the great Pennsylvania system. He discerned where reforms were needed and applied them effectively. In reorganizing the New Jersey lines Mr. Cassatt created the elaborate floating equipment which is now maintained at Jersey City and Philadelphia. He was also the means of securing new and valuable terminal facilities at important points, and in the course of time he established a higher standard of equipment.

The death of J. Edgar Thomson in 1874 elevated Thomas A. Scott to the Presidency of the Pennsylvania Road, and necessitated a reorganization of the executive officers. Mr. Cassatt was made Third Vice President, an office which he filled with distinction for six years. In 1880, when George B. Roberts was elected President, Mr. Cassatt was advanced to the First Vice Presidency. In this capacity he had both the opportunity and the satisfaction of seeing many of the reforms which he had suggested and started as General Manager carried to their fullest development. As First Vice President he had complete charge of the operating and the traffic departments, and upon him also devolved the task of determining the relations between the Pennsylvania and other lines. It was in this particular sphere of usefulness that his rare judgment and ready tact manifested themselves. After he had achieved a pronounced success as the administrative head of the operating and traffic departments of the Pennsylvania Road, Mr. Cassatt found that the work was monopolizing his time, to the exclusion of other interests. On Sept. 30, 1882, he resigned as Vice President, and for the time was retired from railroad building. A few years afterward he was induced to return to the Pennsylvania Directory, where he has since occupied an unostentatious but very influential position. Mr. Cassatt's financial ability and constantly extending business interests brought him into contact with great capitalists and the ablest financiers in this country and abroad, and his judgment in matters of large importance was regarded as of much value. In the financial circles of New York he was very well known. Mr. Cassatt was married in 1878 to Miss Lois Buchanan, a daughter of the Rev. Edward Y. Buchanan, a distinguished clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church. President Buchanan was an uncle of Mrs. Cassatt.

When the Intercontinental Railway Commission came into existence, in 1890, by reason of the action of the International American Conference, President Harrison appointed Mr. A. J. Cassatt and Henry G. Davis as representatives of the United States. Secretary of State James G. Blaine called the commission together in Washington, and told the delegates that he hoped their work would be the auspicious beginning of a great enterprise, designed to draw closer together North America, Central America, and South America. Mr. Cassatt was unanimously elected President of the commission, and he devoted a great deal of time and energy to the work of organizing and directing the preliminary surveys for the proposed railroad. He wrote a letter to the Secretary of State asking that the necessary steps be taken to secure the payment of the additional quotas from the several Central and South American Republics that had accepted the recommendation of the International American Conference in regard to intercommunication by rail.

Another official honor was conferred upon Mr. Cassatt by the President of the United States in the Spring of 1892 in his appointment as a member of the Board of Visitors of the West Point Military Academy. Like George B. Roberts, one of his predecessors in the Pennsylvania Presidential office, Mr. Cassatt began his railroad career as a rodman. It is a singular coincidence that the eulogy of President Roberts, with which Joseph H. Choate closed his oration on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Pennsylvania Railroad on April 13, 1896, should apply in large part to President Cassatt. Following is Mr. Choate's language: "So when you want to get a head for one of these great railroads, what do you do? You don't hunt him out among college graduates; you don't catch a bloated or collapsed financier and make him at once the master of the science of transportation; you do not try to catch a great lawyer or a great orator, only now and then, but you look for a man that entered the service of the company as rodman and worked his way up through every step of service from the bottom to the top, who learned all the details of the

business, so that he could see how everything was done, when it was done right, who learned all the secrets of your business and affairs, internal and external, and then after thirty years you make him your President, and you give your absolute trust to him."

Mr. Cassatt has always been a great lover of horses, and his fame as an owner and breeder extends beyond the seas. His stock farm, Chesterbrook, near Philadelphia, is a model of its kind. It is large and thoroughly equipped with every convenience and modern appliance. It is especially well furnished with brooding paddocks, with all kinds of stables for studs and brood mares. Mr. Cassatt started as a breeder of horses fully a score of years ago merely for his own amusement. He first became interested in thoroughbreds, and was more or less associated with George and Pierre Lorillard, August Belmont the elder, and James Gordon Bennett. Monmouth Park had been for some years in the hands of Col. James Fisk, Jr., and John Morrissey. Late in the seventies Mr. Cassatt, D. D. Withers, the Lorillards, Belmont, and Bennett bought this property with the intention of making it the finest and most fashionable racing place in this country. Their plans were carried out on an elaborate scale, and the new park became very successful.

Attractive stakes were established at Monmouth Park, and the standard of racing was elevated. Mr. Cassatt was President of the Monmouth Park Racing Association for several years prior to 1893, when the track passed into the control of A. F. Wollcott and John A. Morris. Mr. Cassatt purchased The Bard, the most famous horse of its day. This great runner was the king of three-year-olds in 1886, and of four-year-olds in 1887. The Bard won the Coney Island Stakes in both 1887 and 1888, and also won the Brooklyn Handicap in 1888. Since its withdrawal from the turf The Bard has been the head of Mr. Cassatt's stud at Chesterbrook. While an active figure on the turf Mr. Cassatt went into the sport with his characteristic energy and thoroughness. He raced several good horses, and his colors—red, white, and blue—were held in high regard. After awhile a controversy arose between the Monmouth Park Racing Association and the New Jersey authorities, and enemies of the association instigated the arrest of President Cassatt on technical grounds. Very soon afterward Mr. Cassatt retired from the turf, and his one-time noted colors have not appeared on any public track since. For awhile Mr. Cassatt was active in the management of the Board of Control, which was the predecessor of The Jockey Club.

When the more recent craze for hackneys became prevalent, enlisting the enthusiastic attention of Dr. W. Seward Webb, Prescott Lawrence, H. McK. Twombly, and other rich New Yorkers, Mr. Cassatt turned his attention in that direction. He imported the famous horse Cadet at a reputed cost of \$25,000. Cadet was a great prize winner in England, and he won for his American owner the championship prize at the National Horse Show in New York, and in Philadelphia also. Mr. Cassatt has always been one of the principal exhibitors at the annual Horse Shows in Madison Square Garden, and up to about three years ago he drove his own entries. He is an expert whip, handling a four-in-hand, a tandem, or a team with equal ease and skill.

Mr. Cassatt is original as well as active in the breeding of hackneys. Some time ago he tried the experiment of crossing thoroughbreds with hackneys. Some of his friends were curious to know the result, and it is related that a visitor at Chesterbrook recently asked one of the trainers what the get of the thoroughbred-hackney cross amounted to. He received this reply: "Sure, Sir, one of Mr. Cassatt's crossed hackneys will outrun any thoroughbred."

There is no better or more enthusiastic four-in-hand driver than Mr. Cassatt. As President of the Four-in-Hand Club of Philadelphia he has led the annual parades there for several years, and he has on various occasions joined in the parades of the New York Coaching Club. He breeds his own horses, and invariably makes a fine display. In recent years his exhibits at the Horse Shows have included several hackneys of Cadet's get. Besides being a member of the principal and exclusive clubs of Philadelphia, Mr. Cassatt belongs to several New York organizations, among them being the University Club, the New York Yacht Club, the Tandem Club, and the Turf and Field Club.

E. D. B.