

# CARS BADLY SMASHED

## Train Wreck on the Coast Division.

### Terrible Run Down a Steep Grade.

#### A Collision With a Switch Engine Near the Sixteenth-street Shops.

There was a bad smash-up on the Coast division of the Southern Pacific last evening at about 10:30 o'clock. The 9 o'clock freight train left the depot at Third and Townsend streets on time. It consisted of thirty-seven freight cars, three empty passenger coaches and a caboose. The coaches and caboose were on the tail of the train. There were two powerful engines at the head of the train and the switch engine of the yard was pushing. In this fashion the train proceeded out of the freight yard and struck the heavy grade which continues up to Ocean View. When the train reached the Industrial School the switch engine uncoupled and proceeded back to the yard and the rest of the train went on its way. When it reached Ocean View it was found that a part of the train was missing. Eight freight cars, the three passenger coaches and the caboose were gone. The train was immediately run back to see what was the matter. A short distance from Ocean View the eight freight cars were picked

up, the airbrakes being brought then to a standstill. But the rest of the train was still moving. At that time it was a wreck at the machine shops between Sixteenth and Fifteenth streets. The passenger coaches and the caboose must have broken away from the main train near the Industrial School and then started down the grade at a terrible pace. The lights in the coaches were burning so that the flight of the cars could be followed as they thundered along across streets. It is said the runaways attained a speed of seventy miles an hour. Fortunately the cars struck nothing as they flew across the thoroughfares of the city. Neither wagon nor car came in contact with the speeding coaches, but just ahead of the cars was the switch engine, which had started on its return trip, near the Industrial School. Bob Rodgers was the engineer, and he heard the runaways thundering after him. He threw open the throttle and ran at full speed ahead of the coaches, but he could not escape the danger. Just at the machine shops on Harrison street, between Fifteenth and Sixteenth, the caboose struck the rear end of the switch engine. So terrific was the impact that it sounded like an explosion. The jolt was so strong that the coach next the caboose telescoped with the caboose up to the first truck. The trucks of the end coach were knocked out and the switch engine was sent flying ahead. It kept the track, however, although it was badly damaged. The caboose and the end coach are almost a total wreck. The other two coaches are not so badly damaged. The flying coaches were stopped by the collision and by the loss of the rear trucks of the end coach, which plowed along the track, tearing up ties.

Bob Rodgers, the engineer of the switch engine, was injured quite badly in the back and legs.

The 11:45 p. m. passenger train to San Jose was delayed by the wreck. The passengers were carried out to the scene in a train and then transferred around the wreck to another train.

The engineers in charge of the leading locomotives claim the break in the train and subsequent damage to the cars was due to one of the crew leaving a cock of the air brake in one of the coaches open. Each of the passenger coaches was provided with the automatic brakes, which should have been sufficient to hold the train even on the steep grades.

Several of the train crew claim the damage was caused by the pulling out of a Miller hook and not by the fault of the air brakes. They were engaged in supervising the switching of the train and were not in the coaches when it started.