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Poetry.

THE POET'S POWER.

Ay, seen the Poet's Power,
Darken with doubt his glory,
Hurt thou the spirit-spell he weaveth o'er thee.
Till earthly bowd thus heart in youth's warm hour
Grow hard as summer hoar,
Booming the Poet's Power!

Yet know the Poet's song
Rocks holy spirit's spinning,
But sods to Heaven's high throne, and thence returning,
Gladdens the heart to which its strains belong.
A rich reward still earning—
The Poet's hallowed song.

Wo when the Poet's word
No more man's soul awaketh,
Nor on his clouded eye faith's vision breaketh!
Wo when the world's cold heart no more is stirred,
Though trumpet-tongued it speaketh—
The Poet's prophet-word!

Welcome the Poet's Power,
Nor deem he idly dreameth;
The light that on his heaven-borne spirit streameth,
Is but a ray of truth from Eden's tower.
When Love this earth redeameth,
How vast the Poet's Power!

Garz.

THE BRITANNIA TUBULAR BRIDGE.

Notwithstanding the lengthened accounts of this great undertaking that have appeared from time to time in our columns, we are tempted to dwell upon it yet once more. On our recent journey from Balmoral to Windsor, the Queen, Prince Albert, and several of their children made a detour for the purpose of visiting it. The following particulars are extracted from a report of this journey of inspection.

There must surely be some mystical influence about that little island of Anglesea, that the desire to link it to Great Britain has called forth the two most wonderful engineering triumphs of the century. One would fancy that alarm had been felt lest it should, some dark stormy night, drift away down the channel, or perhaps float over, with an easterly gale, to Ireland; or coalesce with the Isle of Man, and make that ancient kingdom once more formidable. It certainly is a remarkable testimony to the indomitable spirit of this country that, to comprehend a little island in our general system of uninterrupted land traffic, we should thus bridge over an arm of the sea, and, at an enormous cost, construct works to which the greatest architectural achievements of ancient times are mere child's play. The truth seems to be, that as in agriculture a wealthy territorial aristocracy has placed at the command of practical men the experimental results of amateur farming; as in our marine we have yachting, and for the improvement of our horseflesh, racing and hunting, so though in a larger and grander sense, the mechanical genius of this country has a fancy development and a favourite arena for display. What Lord's grounds are to the cricketer, or Woolwich marshes to the artilleryman, or the floor of the House to the statesman, or what the boards of old Drury once were to the great tragedian, such is the Menai Strait to the civil engineer. The extraordinary beauty of the scenery enhances the splendour of his achievements, and the blue hills and rubbing water, the variegated banks of the Strait, the broken outlines of the mountainous horizon softened by distance, mansions and humbler dwellings gleaming in the sunshine, and ships gliding along with the current, all shed their influences on his triumphs. For the last generation Telford hung his graceful iron web across the Strait, and it remains an enduring monument of his genius; but these were

days of ordinary and slow locomotion, and it was reserved for Robert Stephenson, the son of the man who more than any other founded our iron highways and put steam power into harness, to show what in our times engineers can do in carrying out that vast railway system with which their professional fame is now so indissolubly associate.

The way in which the Britannia tubular bridge was first suggested to Mr. Stephenson's mind forms a most instructive portion of its history, and may fairly claim a place in this narrative. When the Chester and Holyhead Railway was first formed, the plan contemplated for crossing the Strait was a splendid iron bridge on two arches, the proportions of which may be conceived when it is stated that, whereas the span of the central arch of Southwark Bridge, the largest of the kind in the world, is 240 feet, Mr. Stephenson proposed that the span of each arch in this instance should be 450 feet. The cost was to be £200,000, and in consideration for so large an outlay at such a point, the Government of Sir R. Peel consented by an act unprecedented in the history of English railways, to pay £20,000 a year during seven years, for the transmission of the mails. This arrangement still hold, but unfortunately for the company, the Admiralty objected to the bridge as likely to obstruct the navigation of the Strait, and the consequence was that (his bridge plan being condemned) Mr. Stephenson, as engineer, found himself in what Yankees call a "regular fix." The idea of an iron tube then occurred to him, but the expense of constructing it was so enormous that, it is said, could he have been permitted to fill up the Strait with a solid embankment of masonry 1,850 feet long, 160 feet high, and containing about 5,000,000 cubic yards of material, he would have found it cheaper and far easier to do so. This will give some idea of the strong necessity under which the Britannia bridge was projected, of the magnitude of an undertaking which left such a preferable alternative, and of the difficulties which Englishmen will surmount in the prosecution of enterprises to which they have committed themselves. The Chester and Holyhead Company constructed this great tube at a cost of £700,000, and they receive from Government the annuity of £20,000 for seven years, granted to them in consideration of a design involving only a £200,000 outlay. The original shareholders have never had a penny of dividend upon their shares, and the packet service to Dublin, which they formed in connexion with their line, after having been brought by them to the highest perfection, is still entirely dependent for its support on the passenger traffic across the channel. The mail contract, having been exposed by the Government to public competition, was given (perhaps rightly in principle) to the Dublin Steampacket Company, without any reference to the enormous cost of the great tube. Will that cost be eventually covered, and this marvellous enterprise, in the long run, compensate those engaged on it? Let us hope it may. Puxton has been laying out a park close to the bridge which looks as if a new town were intended to be formed there—a sort of Brighton for the busy tail-worn population of Lancashire. That will help somewhat; and, should Ireland ever prosper, the company must share her improving fortunes.

The Royal party left the Pearyn Arms at half past 9 o'clock, in carriages, and proceeded by the turnpike road to the suspension bridge. Standing at the north end of the Britannia tube, and looking along the Strait towards Telford's great work, for some minutes nothing could be seen of the illustrious travellers; and the salutes fired from different points on either shore, the echoes of which were prolonged among the hills, alone indicated that they were com-

ing. It was a magnificent October morning, the night-mist being lifted up like a veil from the face of the landscape, and the mountains, with Snowdon chief among them, being clear and well defined to their horizon to the remotest summits. The tide was flowing high through the Strait, covering everything that it was desirable to conceal, and even threatening two or three little houses perched upon level rocks in the channel. The faint sound of a cheer reaching the tube indicated that the Queen was crossing the suspension bridge, which is about a mile off, as the crow flies: Straining the eyesight at that distance the Royal carriage could just be seen, four in number and diminished to a size appropriate to Queen Mab's rather than Queen Victoria's stable. A louder cheer welcomed the arrival of Her Majesty in Anglesa, then, after a few minutes waiting, the scarlet-coated outriders were observed heading the cortege, which received as it passed along, the greetings of the peasantry picturesquely grouped at different points. It went on to Llanfair station, which is three quarters of a mile from the north entrance of the tube, and there, on alighting and entering the train, the Royal party were received by a guard of honour belonging to the Welch Fusiliers, the regiment which was appropriately at Bangor and other points in the principality have performed the military duties attendant on the Queen's visit. The Fusiliers exhibit at their head, with characteristic Cambrian pride, a very fine white goat, presented to them some years ago by Her Majesty. At Llanfair station Mr. Stephenson met the Royal party, and it was arranged that Her Majesty should go through the tube in the state carriage detached from the engine, and drawn by men, while Prince Albert, the Prince of Wales, and a portion of the suite would ascend to the roof of the tube and walk along to the Welch side. This was accordingly done, but before the Royal party separated, some little time was spent by Her Majesty and the Prince in conversation with Mr. Stephenson, who explained to them on the spot the mechanical principles on which the bridge was constructed—the strength, the distribution of the material, and the leading details by which so vast an undertaking was successfully completed. A train had passed through to Holyhead only a few minutes before the arrival of travellers, and it is a pity that they lost the opportunity which this afforded for seeing what is, perhaps, the most wonderful sight connected with this marvellous work. Looking through the tube, which is 1,850 feet long, you see the firebox of the engine gleaming as it advances from the other extremity. You hear the throb of the locomotive, and the reverberation of the iron, the shriek of the steam-whistle startles you with its almost demoniacal expression; and, as you listen and gaze, a mass of sound gradually accumulating to a perfect hurricane, wells upon the ear, while the brightening glow of the furnace, and the majestic progress of the engine fill the eye and impress the imagination. It is a fine and impressive sight to see an express train sweep by, but the effect is ineradicable a hundred fold, in the Britannia Bridge, and should be tested by all who visit it. While the Queen passed slowly through the tube to the Caernarvonshire end, the Prince accompanied by Mr. Stephenson, traversed the roof in the same direction. It is slightly curved to allow the water to run, and reminds us very much of the deck of a vessel, or the top of some giant omnibus without a "knee-board." The view from it is magnificent, and no description can do it justice. Arrived at the south, or near end of the bridge, the Royal party descended to the water's edge, and surveyed from beneath the gigantic proportions of the whole structure. This gives by far the best and most imposing conception of its true magnitude. For like St. Peter's at Rome,