

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

SUCH were some of the labours and difficulties encountered in the construction of this enormous work. They were due to the character of the situation and foundation for the works ; to the rapidity and power of the current of the river ; to the difficulty of obtaining, and to the still greater difficulty of controlling, labour ; and, even beyond all this, to the shortness of the seasons, to the severity of the climate, and the limited period into which, latterly, the work was obliged to be compressed. Those who have had practical experience, in however limited a degree, of the effect of such difficulties, will be best able to estimate their importance, and appreciate the way in which they were surmounted. The writer will only say that, for his own part, he did his best, by the aid of those about him, to turn the difficulties of his position to account,—to render even the ice, the current, and the temperature subservient to purposes of convenience, expedition, and security in the progress of the works.

That his great task was successfully accomplished is, primarily, owing to the spirit and inspiration he derived from the confidence reposed in him by his employers. Looking back at all the various difficulties, practical and financial, by which this work was from time to time embarrassed, it scarcely admits of doubt that, in the hands of other and less energetic and persevering contractors than Messrs. Peto, Brassey, and Betts, it would not have seen the successful issue to which it has been brought. Amid every discouragement they stood stoutly to the task ; and when the hearts of all around them seemed about to fail, their encouragement, enterprise, and assuring confidence kept everything going. As Mr. Robert Stephenson enunciated, in the course of an address on the subject of the bridge at a dinner given to him in 1853 by the engineering profession of Canada, at Toronto, “ the contractors left even the engineers themselves little more than the poetry of engineering.”

Next to them, the writer feels in duty bound to record his most grateful acknowledgments and thanks to all his assistants and subordinates. It was not only that they zealously seconded his efforts : they did much more. The novel character of the work and its various vicissitudes afforded scope for the exercise of their ingenuity, and elicited