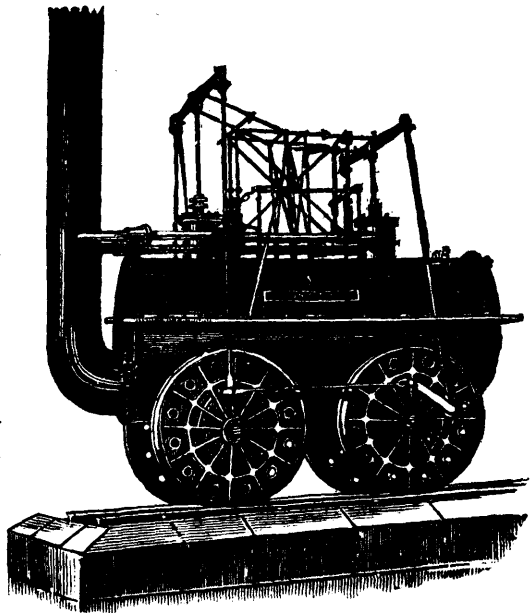


way under certain conditions. The Act provides for the passage of waggons and other carriages, with men and horses, and the public, on payment of proper tolls, were to be free to use the road "with horses, cattle and carriages," between the hours of seven in the morning and six in the evening during the winter months, between six in the morning and eight in the evening during two spring and two autumn months, and between five in the morning and ten in the evening during May, June, July and August. By the advice of George Stephenson, who was appointed engineer and surveyor to the line, iron rails were laid down instead of wood, and, as he gradually gained more and more the confidence of the directors, he urged upon them, at length successfully, to employ a locomotive engine, such as that which he had already constructed and worked successfully at Killingworth Colliery. The Royal assent was given to the bill on April 19, 1821, and on September 27, 1825, the line was opened for traffic in the presence of great crowds of people congregated to witness the novel and interesting experiments. Two stationary engines were fixed on the opposite sides of a deep ravine at the western extremity of the line; but as soon as the more level portions to the eastward were reached the trains were attached to a locomotive which once, on the first day, attained a speed of fifteen miles an hour with a load of ninety tons, and which accomplished the whole journey at not less than eight miles an hour.

"The conveyance of passengers formed no part of the original scheme, but on the opening day nearly 600 persons were taken from Darlington to Stockton and back, and passengers soon insisted

upon being taken regularly, so that it became necessary to provide carriages adapted to their requirements. In the course of a few years the traffic of all kinds grew and increased enormously, and it was finally received into the system of the North-Eastern Company, of which it still forms part.'

"We should fancy that the story of George Stephenson's life is known wherever the English language is spoken. Who has not heard of his famous answer in reference to 'the coo?' Who does not know how, 'during the



intervals of business,' he taught the young ladies of the Pease family the art and practice of embroidery? George Stephenson was the son of Robert Stephenson, or 'Old Bob,' as the neighbors termed the engine-man at the Wylam pit. Wylam, we may state, is a colliery village situated on the north bank of the Tyne, about eight miles west of Newcastle-on-Tyne. From a tender of cows to a leader of horses at the plough (spending his leisure hours the while in making clay models of engines), he progressed until