

that, in drawing a sketch of the men who built the Victoria Bridge, the foreground of the picture should be occupied by the illustrious STEPHENSON; but in attempting to consider the author of the tubular system, the mind instinctively reverts to the father, whose achievements rendered necessary the great Britannia and Victoria Bridges,—structures which would be without existence, had it not been for the undaunted energy, genius, and determination of character possessed by the once poor and ignorant collier lad,—the two great developments being mutually dependent on, and necessary to each other. Following this idea, a sketch of the country which required and obtained both, to their fullest extent, has been given. Numerous authorities have been consulted and made use of throughout the entire work.

The late unhappy discussions as to the amount of credit due different Engineers for the projection and successful carrying out of this wonder of the age, led to a thorough examination into the various plans and reports brought forward by these gentlemen at different periods, and it is hoped that the impartial verdict of the reader will render justice to all. With the oil thus thrown upon the troubled waters, may they imitate that perfect self-abnegation which characterized the writings and public speeches of George and Robert Stephenson, when dwelling on their own works; resting confident, that as the Victoria Bridge was not accomplished by one man, to no one will all the praise be awarded by a discerning public, but each receive his meed of credit according to the degree entitled.

If this result will to any extent be brought about by a perusal of the following pages, the writing of them will not have been in vain.

Montreal, April, 1860.