

CHAPTER XXII.

PROGRESS MADE, 1859.

THE last year of construction had now arrived, and with its close is destined to be memorable in the annals of time, as having furnished this triumphant result of the labour of man, for the admiration of all generations to come. A year in the time of completion had been curtailed for a "consideration," far from equivalent to the increased cost, resulting in the additional exertions requisite for bringing it to pass; the dark hours of night had to be appropriated for work otherwise requiring the bright sun light of day; many additional men were required for forcing the work forward at this railway speed, and under such circumstances greatly enhanced the cost. The contract sum was swallowed up, together with the bonus; large drafts on the private resources of the gentlemen composing the firm, were required to bring the thing to pass. But they were men who faltered not; the country required the use of the bridge by the close of 1859, and was not disappointed.

At the close of the year 1858, we stated, everything augured favourably for the next season's completion. A vast amount of work had, however, to be accomplished, and any unforeseen mishap or accident might operate seriously against it. 13 tubes, including the large one, many of them still in England, had to be erected, with all the scaffolds, which were now rendered a difficult and hazardous undertaking by reason of the almost mill-race current in 20 feet of water, and the extraordinary strength required to guard against danger of rafts, when occasionally as