

Till vale and hall with radiant dyes,
 Became another Paradise?
 And thou hast sprinkled leaves and flowers,
 And goodly chains of leafy bowers,
 And bade thy youthful warblers sing
 On oak and knoll the song of spring;
 And blackbird's note of ecstacy
 Burst loudly from the woodbine tree,
 Till all the world is thronged with gladness:
 Her multitudes have done with sadness.
 O summer, do I ask in vain?
 Thus in thy glory wilt thou deign
 My messenger to be?
 Hence from the bowels of the land
 Of wild, wild Gwyneth to the strand
 Of fair Glamorgan—ocean's band—
 Sweet margin of the sea!
 To dear Glamorgan, when we part,
 Oh, bear a thousand times my heart;
 My blessing give a thousand times,
 And crown with joy her glowing climes.

* * * * *

Oh! lavish blossoms with thy hand
 O'er all the forests of the land:
 And let thy gifts like floods descending
 O'er every hill and glen be blending;
 Let orchard, garden, vine express
 Thy fulness and thy fruitfulness,
 O'er all the land of beauty fling
 The costly traces of thy wing.
 And thus 'mid all thy radiant flowers,
 Thy thickening leaves and glossy bowers,
 The poet's task shall be to glean
 Roses and flowers that softly bloom,
 (The jewels of the forest's gloom)
 And trefails wove in pavement green,
 With sad humility to grace
 His golden Ivor's resting-place."

These lines read much more like a poem of the present day than one five centuries old. There are some five stanzas to the wind, commencing:—

"Bodiless glory of the sky,
 That wingless, footless, strong, and loud,
 Leap'st on thy starry path on high,
 And chantest midst the mountain cloud;
 Fleet as the wave, and fetterless as light."

When fallen into the sere and yellow leaf, the archer-bard wisely turned his thoughts to his condition:—

"Youth has fled, and like a dart,
 Grief is planted in my heart;
 All the joy of life is gone;
 Strengthen me, thou Secret One.
 All my strength like chaff is sere;
 Death is threateningly near;
 Near is the impending doom—
 Earth, and darkness, and the tomb.
 Christ, my thoughts, my footsteps lead:
 Amen: no other guide I need."

MEN I HAVE KNOWN.

SIR MARK ISAMBARD BRUNEL.

BRUNEL the younger, and Stephenson, also the younger, are both gone. The broad gauge and the narrow gauge have led but to the grave; and these eminent engineers, who have covered the earth with their wonderful works, can now only occupy the space of a schoolboy's leap. The great conductors of steam railways and electricity over the bounds of the universe have been borne to their last abode of solitude and silence. But the memory of these great masters of magical mechanics is yet too green for me to include in my sketches—meant to be distinct from biographical dictionaries, and, by

a few characteristic traits, to afford to others somewhat of a personal acquaintance with those worthy of note, whom I have known within the passing nineteenth century. To its commencement, and even antedating that a little, I now go back.

Mark Brunel, the elder, was born not far from Rouen, the great centre of the industry of Normandy; where Corneille and Fontenelle were also born; where the statue of the Maid of Orleans stands a monument, *vere perennius*, to superstition, fanaticism, and barbarity; and where, above all, cottons and silks are evolved from busy looms, hardware is hammered, chemicals are manipulated, and confectionary, the nicest in France, is deliciously compounded for the encouragement of such clever little fellows as Mark. For he was clever, lively, intelligent, inquisitive, and French. He was, besides, of respectable family, and educated so far with a view to the priesthood; but, impelled by his strong bias, he devoted himself to mechanics, and to those scientific studies which are necessary for the attainment of pre-eminent skill in mechanical art.

The career of a man who has contributed so large a share to the improvement of the age, cannot fail of instruction; for it must show how difficulties are surmounted and perseverance crowned. After exercising his ingenuity for awhile in his native country, at a period when its terrible convulsions destroyed every effort and hope of industry, our ardent mechanic sought the congenial soil of England for the employment of his talents, feeling strong in the conviction of his power to perform services worthy of the patronage of a great naval nation. But we are aware of the old saying, "To know, to do, to suffer," is too often the fate of unappreciated genius. Brunel was no exception to the rule. He presented project after project to the authorities; he laid plan after plan before the government. He argued, he demonstrated, but all in vain. In those days, whatever it may be now, a constructive applicant was sure to be delayed, if not defeated by the obstructives of office. The preventive was an over-match for the inventive; and Privy Council, Ordnance Department, and Admiralty, were plied with the usual effect by the assiduous foreigner, whose formal billets of perpetual objection to whatsoever he proposed, and rejection of whatsoever he offered, would have tired out any less zealous projector, without supplying a single page of variety to the complete (official) Letter Writer. But he, in conscious self-reliance, still endured

"The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes."

At length, at his wit's end, he almost gave up in absolute despair; and, as a valedictory memorial of his merits and want of success, thought only of presenting a curious bagatelle to Lady Spencer, whose lord was at the head of the Admiralty, and had shown some personal attention to the lively little Frenchman during his wearisome waiting visits to obtain a trial of his experiments. In those days, round games at cards were a favourite amusement for ladies, as gambling, unfortunately, was for gentlemen; and Lady Spencer, in her high

position, could not be out of fashion. To her ladyship, therefore, M. Brunel sent what appeared to be a miniature pigeon-house, shaped like a turret, and with pigeon-holes all round the upper part. It was not, however, for pigeons, though it might be for pigeoning. It was, in fact, a contrivance for dealing cards for round games. The cards were laid in at the top, a spring was touched, the tower whirled about, and, according to the index, dealt as many cards from the apertures into as many packets as was desired. Everybody was in raptures with the design, and the cards turned up trumps for the lucky inventor. Trifle as it was, the card-dealer was exceedingly ingenious, and the artist having thus won his way to a fair hearing, was within a very short period settled at Portsmouth, superintending the manufacture of that block machinery, of which it is not too much to say that to it Great Britain was deeply indebted for the means by which her grand series of brilliant victories were achieved, and a commerce that overspread the globe was nourished and protected. And how simple did it seem—more simple than the card-engine; for here the shapeless lump of wood was merely thrown into the machine, and in a few seconds emerged the complete, convoluted, and finished block, which had hitherto taxed the utmost skill and patience of experienced workmen to produce in sufficient quantity to supply the pressing wants of naval supremacy.

Henceforward there was, of course, remunerative business for M. Brunel; and he continued to make new and important additions to his undertakings, of which his adopted country reaped the benefit. He went on improving and prospering. But such a spirit can never be still. There must ever be some object in view to keep alive its activity. The Thames Tunnel came upon the public with a startling effect. It was a problem, Opinion ran into admiration or ridicule. Extremes, and no medium, and the most entertaining "reason why?" was assigned by a travelling countryman of the projector's, who treating, as French authors will do, of English national character, stated that we were ever emulous till we had attained a certain pitch of excellence, which we immediately despised, and then turned quite another way to gratify our restless ambition. Thus, he observed, "Having succeeded in building the finest bridges in the world over rivers, they became quite disgusted with the perfection, and got my compatriot, M. Brunel, to devise for them a sort of bridge, not to go over, but under the river." The joyous and jocund proponent of this matchless scheme, ever as playful as in his boyhood, would laugh heartily at the explanation, and still more when told of the remark, in broken English, of another of his Norman friends, who boasted of him as a very great giant in engineering, who had "pushed his toe-nail" (tunnel) all under the Thames.

His action was brisk; his laugh was always ready, loud, and merry; his ideas original and extraordinary. I remember, on one philosophic-festive occasion, when dilating on the inexhaustible wealth and resources of Great Britain, he calculated an approximate value of her canals and turnpike

roads, and ended with an estimate showing how many gold and silver watches were worn by particular members belonging to the several classes of the people, and how, if laid down on the road, touching each other, they would reach from London to Portsmouth, with a few miles, roads, and yards to spare. He was perfectly in earnest, and probably not far wrong in the total sum of value he attached to this very long watch-chain.

Sir Mark Isambard Brunel died ten years ago, much beloved and lamented. His unassuming manners, tinged with a ready disposition for pleasant humour, furnished no intimation of the extraordinary mechanical talent with which he was gifted. He was the impersonation of Philosophy in Sport, and not the less a true philosopher.

THE CHANNEL ISLANDS.

HAVING been induced to spend a part of my summer holidays last year in the Channel Islands, I was agreeably surprised at the numerous points of interest which they present to the English tourist. It is a common remark that we seek attractions in foreign lands which lie unobserved at our own doors. Doubtless, in this case, the sea voyage is a serious impediment, for the islands lie in the most exposed part of the Channel, where winds and waves are often more disagreeable than on the open ocean. The passage to Guernsey, however, is usually accomplished from Plymouth or Weymouth in seven or eight hours, and from Southampton in ten or eleven; while to those who like a good blow on the salt water, the longer voyage from London Bridge offers the attraction of very low fares. There is also a small steamer at a low price between Newhaven and Jersey. The distances from this island are as follows:—Guernsey, 32; Weymouth, 105; Plymouth, 110; Southampton, 132; Newhaven, 145.

I crossed myself from Plymouth, where we steamed through the Channel squadron lying in the Sound, and with a bright sun and sparkling sea, the billows bounding vigorously before a capful of wind, and at times shaking the manes of their white horses in rather too lively a mood. The good boat "Sir Walter Raleigh" ploughed her way along the cliffs of Devonshire to the Start, and so onward to our destination. Alderney was in sight before England had disappeared; but our course lay away to the right, and I saw nothing of the famous fortifications there constructing as a counterpoise to Cherbourg.

On nearing Guernsey, I found the sea all studded with rocks, which render the navigation intricate and perilous to inexperienced hands. All of them, including the larger islands, are rocks of the primary formation, granite, gneiss, and hornblend, and of course wholly void of fossil remains. Such rocks often rise in peaks and precipices, imparting a wild and rugged aspect to the scenery, but in these islands a mild form of beauty prevails. The outline is rounded and undulating; the numerous bays which indent the shores are radiant with smiles, and a few caves are all one sees of the