he was about twenty years old, he suddenly resolved to leave home—not home only, but England too. Perhaps he was wrong and hasty, but it is not for me to condemn. However this might be, nothing could stop him, and he went. He never returned; it is long since, and I am persuaded he is dead—my poor brother.

"My brother's going away was, I am afraid, a heavy blow to our father. He did not hold up his head after that, but drooped and drooped, till at last he became but the shadow of his former self.

"Until then, I had remained at home, helping him—I can scarcely say that, though, but having employment—in his office; and even in those early days I had begun, though secretly, the courses through which I afterwards—*fell*. In our town, down an obscure alley, there was a billiard-room, with its usual concomitant, a wine and spirit, otherwise called a refreshment, room. Unhappily, I had long evenings at my command, and I had companions, as unoccupied as myself, who introduced me to this scene of dissipation. I soon learned to play and to drink, and to love the excitement of both vices; while my father's rapidly increasing infirmities gave me the power to indulge in them, not only without control, but without his even suspecting that I was going astray.

"It was my frequent practice," continued the speaker, "to wait till my father retired to his chamber—which he did very early in the evening—and then to steal out, with a latch-key in my pocket, and not return till long after midnight, when I softly and silently let myself in, and crept, like a thief and a villain, to my own room. I could not have done this, so easily at least, without collusion on the part of my father's housekeeper; but she was so far an unprincipled woman, and she did not trouble herself about the matter.

"One night, I was as usual at the billiard-table, stripped of my coat, heated with play, and flushed with wine, when a knocking at the outer door, and a slight disturbance in the room below, caused the players to pause in their game. In another moment the door of the billiard-room was opened, and some one—to this day I know not who—broke in, and called me by my name. I stared wildly at the messenger, and heard him say, 'You must make haste home; your father is dying.'

"I heard no more. Without waiting or thinking to put on my coat, I rushed through the streets, and just as the church clocks were striking two, I reached the door of our house. It was unfastened; I entered, and then stopped tremblingly to listen. In a moment or two the housekeeper was with me, pale with affright and sorrow. By her, my worst fears were confirmed. She had been suddenly aroused by the hard and unnatural breathing of my father, her room being next to his; and on going to his chamber, she had found him in a fit, extended on the floor. Her first impulse was to seek me in my room, with but slender expectation, however, of finding me there. Her next was to obtain a messenger to a surgeon, and then to seek me where, she well guessed, I was to be found. Happily a messenger was at hand, in a man who was passing down the street; and the surgeon and assistant had already arrived, and were then endeavouring to restore my poor father to consciousness.

"All this, the woman told me in a hurried agitated manner, and I did not wait to hear more. In another moment I was in my father's room. But I will not speak of this: only let me say that all the doctor's skill was futile. In the course of a few hours my dear father was dead."

Arrived thus far in his history, the poor clerk rose and paced his chamber—his bosom heaving with emotion. At length he turned to his guest, and said in a low broken voice: "I cannot tell you more now; come again to-morrow night." Whereupon Mr. Keenedge respectfully withdrew.

SUMMER-TIME IN MOELFRA BAY.

To me, sitting on a limestone crag which projects from the cliff and overhangs the water beneath, the bay looks the very image and presentment of all that is peaceful. The morning is one of the brightest in early July, and the freshness of the late spring has hardly given way to the fervid heat of summer. The lark is singing up on high, quite out of sight, and a pair of thrushes in the long grass by the hedgerow are making pleasant music. There is plenty of herbage growing quite up to the edge of the cliff, and the sheep—all white from their recent shearing—are browsing in small companies, some of them, as it seems, in dangerous proximity to the verge. A fragrant perfume comes to me on the gentle wind that blows from in-shore, and I can see that the hedgerow where the thrushes are singing is yellow with the blossoms of the wild honeysuckle. The green slopes which encircle the bay are dotted here and there with farmsteads, cottages, and a few dwellings of the better sort; cornfields are waving with the green promise of harvest, and the tall church spire rises white and tapering from the surrounding trees. Yonder, to the left, is the little low island with its lighthouse, which has beamed forth its friendly warning to many a storm-driven vessel, though to some, alas! it has been unavailing. From the same quarter comes the feeble click of the quarryman's pick and hammer; and I can see them—looking like bees in the distance—on a far-off ledge, chiselling out blocks of limestone from the solid cliff. On the right, the bay is bounded by another island, between which and the mainland runs a strong eddy; from it Red Wharf Bay sweeps round to a more distant point; and further off still rises the Great Orme's Head, lifting its huge crest right up from the sea. Altogether the prospect on this clear summer morning is one to gladden the eye; and as the waves roll in with a soft ripple, amongst the pointed projections of this vast limestone rock, their murmur is most musical and dreamy.

Yet this is the place that witnessed, some eight months back, that harrowing scene of shipwreck, which has become a matter of melancholy history to the world. On this very crag where I am sitting, the gallant vessel, the "Royal Charter," struck with all the force which the wild storm could give

her; here she heaved, and tossed, and laboured, and finally sunk down amongst the mud and sand and seaweed where she now ignominiously lies. As I look round on the sunlit and rejoicing landscape, I can hardly realize that on these very objects which now appear so cheery, five hundred people turned their last look of life: that here, where birds are singing close by, and cattle feeding, and men working as elsewhere, five hundred people went down "to the death of them that are slain in the midst of the seas." Yet so it is that death and life go hand in hand together, and death preys upon life, and life springs out of death, and the two great mysteries divide the world between them.

Thus I thought and wrote, as I sat upon the rock close underneath which the wreck of the "Royal Charter" is lying, just in the spot where she went down. A small part only of the vessel has been removed; the remainder, in three portions, having settled down gradually, till it has become firmly imbedded in the mud and sand, and the hold and cabins weighted with the same material. The engine-room is to be seen rising several feet above the water, and a couple of buoys, floating one at each end, indicate the great length of the vessel. When the water is very still and clear, more of the wreck may be seen, but otherwise the upper deck and framework having been broken up, the remainder is too far beneath the surface to be discernible. The hold remains in much the same condition as when she struck, the passengers' trunks and luggage having as yet been left undisturbed; so that many sadly interesting revelations may yet be brought to light respecting the ill-fated ship and her freight of human beings. Some time since, when the tides were unusually low, and much of the wreck was exposed to view, there was seen in her side, just below water-mark, the fatal rent through which the sea had poured into the cabins. One of the iron plates had been thrust in by the ship's violent driving against the pointed crag, and from that time till she went down, the passengers were probably neck-deep in water. Faint, despairing, drenched with the icy waves, the poor victims were perhaps hardly conscious of the bitterness of the last struggle; it might have been, as a boatman said to me, that "they didn't know their death when it came."

The hull and stern have been raised and towed round the point at a few hundred yards distance from the wreck, where they have been dragged on shore to be broken up. I saw the village boys playing round them, and swimming their tiny boats in the pools close by, growing up to love the treacherous sea, in spite of wrecks and storms. Here, fixed in this broken framework, had been the wheel, and here the helmsman died at his post; underneath were the remains of the powerful screw, all bent, jagged, and broken. Looking with curious eye at the shattered boarding outside, I made out what had once been modelled and painted upon it as an allegorical device—Neptune in his chariot, trident in hand, gliding with light wheels over the smooth waves, and the Winds going forth from his presence to discharge his auspicious bidding. How sad a commentary does the sequel furnish upon this mythological text!

The shore is still strewn with the relics of the lost ship; bonnets and boots, portions of female garments, stockings, woollen comforters, spars, pieces of canvas and cording, and rivets that have been broken from the iron plates. A sailor's long boot, cut clean off half way down, as if by some sharp heavy blow (as a coast-guardsman said, "perhaps the poor fellow's leg might have been in it at the time"); an officer's cap, with the gold lace upon it, all muddy and black as the cloth itself; a rotten shred of a linen garment that had once been embroidered; a tiny shoe that would fit an infant's foot of a year old; these were amongst the things that I saw lying on the shore, and which the next tide would wash back again into the sea. Little gold is met with now, though it is probable that, for many years to come, it will be found, more or less, upon the beach after a heavy storm. For months past, also, the sea has ceased to give up those most melancholy burdens, of which so many were borne ashore in the first few weeks after the wreck. Nearly two-thirds of those who went down in the "Royal Charter," within thirty yards of land, will, nevertheless, sleep beneath the waters till the sea shall give up its dead.

I met and conversed with several who were present at the wreck, who were there shortly after the ship struck, who saw her part in pieces and go down. Some of the melancholy incidents of that fatal morning were related to me by veracious eye-witnesses, amongst which was the following affecting occurrence. A saloon-passenger had brought with him his son, a child of three years of age, the only relation he had on board. After the vessel had struck, the father stood on the deck, with his child clasped in his arms. When the ship, with a horrid crash, broke in two, he was swept off by a mighty wave, and washed up as far as the rock, with his boy still in his arms; but the reflux of the wave took him back again, and also swept the child from his grasp. Another inflowing swell took him again to the rock, and brought the infant once more within his reach. With one hand he clutched the child's arm, and with the other seized the cliff, but the force of the retiring water again overcame his strength, he was swept back, and they were again separated. The next wave carried the father to a firm foothold on the rock, but the child had sunk beneath the waters. For four days and nights, with scarcely any rest, the heart-broken parent wandered along the cliffs and shore, seeking the body of his child. On the fifth day he found it; found it himself, by the little island eastward, whither the eddying current had drawn it. My informant said he should never forget the cry of love and anguish which the father uttered as he took up the little dripping corpse, and pressed it to his bosom in an unavailing embrace. The father's love had been as strong as human love could be, but it had had no power to deliver in that murderous storm; and now that the cruel wave had given up the body, the most that he could do was to seek a sacred spot of earth, and bury his dead baby out of sight.

The man who told me this was bronzed and weather-beaten with many years of sun and storm, but his eye glistened and his voice faltered as he spoke; and I was glad to find that his heart could understand me when I talked with him of One whose love to his people is more than a father's love, from whose arms no waves of earthly trouble can sweep his children; whose strong embrace not even the storm of death can be strong enough to overcome.

One side of the churchyard at Llanallgo, about a mile away, is filled with the graves of those whom the waves have given up from the wreck. There they lie, four together in their narrow bed, for the most part nameless and unrecognised. The care of some pious ladies has planted the hillocks with flowers, and they blossom in rich profusion over the unknown dead. As I passed away from that sad churchyard, I paused for a moment at the door of the village school, where the children were singing in English a favourite hymn in those parts, concerning the resurrection from the dead and the reward of the just. It was pleasant to turn to such reflections from the affecting memorials of death which I had just been contemplating; pleasant to leave the wreck, and meditate upon the land "where there shall be no more sea."

ROBERT STEPHENSON.

PART II.

For nearly thirty subsequent years, or to the time of his lamented decease, the life of Robert Stephenson was one of astonishing activity for a man never of robust constitution. His name was perpetually before the public, in connection with some important undertaking; and his career as an engineer was an uninterrupted success. The objects specially contemplated in his constructions—simplicity, permanence, and utility—contributed to this result, together with the care with which he elaborated his plans, and attended to the minutest details, before attempting to carry them into effect. Unlike Brunel, his great contemporary, whose genius was more splendid in designing than cautious in executing, Stephenson, while equally bold in conception, was eminently practical. He thought over the whole problem to be solved, in all its bearings, before committing himself to the actual solution, and enhanced his own reputation by consulting it in connection with the commercial interests of those who intrusted him with their confidence. Brunel, on the other hand, aiming at brilliancy in the line of inventive art, was apt to leave many difficulties unheeded, to hamper him in execution, and produced the most glorious growths of a scientific intellect, to disappoint expectation in their economic results. The career of the two has some striking coincidences. They were both the sons of eminent fathers, who opened up to them the path to distinction. Both were engaged in the same description of gigantic works, which will remain, for centuries to come, monuments of their skill and of the enterprise of their era. They were also nearly the same in age, and both died prematurely, within a month of each other. Though often in antagonism, warmly advocating their respective views, as in the celebrated "battle of the gauges," they were firm and fast friends to the last. Brunel was on the Menai, to aid Stephenson in floating and fixing the enormous tubes of the Britannia bridge; and Stephenson was on the Thames, to assist Brunel in the launch of the "Great Eastern."

Appointed to execute the London and Birmingham railway, the first sod for which was cut at Chalk Farm on the 1st of June, 1834, Mr. Stephenson fixed his residence in the metropolis, and is said to have walked over the ground of the projected line twenty times before he was satisfied with his survey. Often did the scene in his offices, Great George Street, Westminster, resemble the levee of a minister of state. He superintended altogether the construction of no less than 1850 miles of railway, at an outlay of about £70,000,000 sterling; served as an engineer in Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Egypt, Canada, and Norway; received the ribbon and cross of the order of Leopold from the king of the Belgians, and the grand cross of the order of St. Oliff from the king of Norway and Sweden; declined the offer of knighthood at home; became M.P. for Whitby in 1847; and succeeded to his father's fortune upon his decease in 1848. The latter died at Tapton House, near Chesterfield, Derbyshire, beautifully situated on a woodland hill, which had been his residence about ten years—a striking contrast to his homely cottage at Killingworth. Immense demands were made upon the time of both father and son, by all kinds of contrivers and projectors, anxious for an opinion in favour of their schemes as a passport to success. They were often as crude as the following lines are doggrel, in which a disappointed candidate for patronage vented his displeasure in one of the railway papers.

> "I saw your son Robert, oh fie! oh fie!
> He looked upon me with disdain:
> His father could see, with half an eye,
> Far more than I could explain.
>
> "He wouldn't allow me to leave him my models,
> Or a drawing, nor yet read my rhyme;
> For many came to him with crack'd noddles,
> Which occupied half of his time."

To real merit neither father nor son were inattentive, and considerately respected the feelings of the deserving, however humble their station.

Elected President of the Institution of Civil Engineers for the year 1856, Mr. R. Stephenson laid before that body an interesting *resumé* of British railways, on taking the chair. They exceeded in length, he stated, the ten chief rivers of Europe united; and more than enough of single rails had been laid down to make an iron girdle round the globe. The cost of these lines had been £286,000,000, equal to one-third the amount of the national debt. Hills and mountains had been penetrated with tunnels to the extent of nearly 70 miles. The earth-works measured 550,000,000 of cubic yards. In comparison with the pyramid which these works would rear, St. Paul's would be but as a pigmy to a giant, for the pyramid would rise a mile and a half high, from a base larger than St. James's Park. At least 25 000 bridges had