

CHAPTER XI

END OF RESIDENCE IN LEEDS

I CONTINUED to work regularly at the Railway Company's Office. There was much to do; "calls" to be made and looked after; money to be borrowed on loan and debenture to meet the heavy charges for constructing the line; and a good deal of correspondence to be conducted. New Acts had also to be applied for, which led me to be often in London to give evidence during the Parliamentary session.

The line, as originally laid out, ended at a junction with the Great North of England Railway, near Thirsk. But this was no sufficient terminus. It was found necessary to carry the line further, and to bring it into connection with the important seaport towns of the North. It was then determined to apply for Acts to enable the line to be extended to Stockton, Hartlepool, and perhaps Sunderland and Newcastle-upon-Tyne; as well as to make junctions with the Stockton and Darlington Railway, near Stockton and Middlesborough, and also with the York and Newcastle Railway at Ferryhill, in the county of Durham.

In 1848, Acts were applied for and obtained, to extend the railway to Stockton-on-Tees, and to a junction with the Stockton and Hartlepool Railway,

by which an access could be obtained to the thriving new port of West Hartlepool. The name of the Company was altered from "Leeds and Thirsk" to "Leeds Northern." New shares were got out and taken up with difficulty. Preference shares were created, and taken up with greater ease. In the meantime the works were pushed forward. The first locomotive passed through the Bramhope Tunnel on the 31st of May 1849; and the directors opened the line to Thirsk on the 9th of July following.

In the meantime, a large block of land had been purchased in Wellington Street for the purposes of the new station in Leeds. Several other companies desired to have station accommodation in the town, more especially the London and North-Western Company, which had absorbed the Leeds, Dewsbury, and Huddersfield Railway; the Great Northern, which had obtained access to Leeds; and the Leeds and Manchester Company, which desired to have station accommodation of its own. The necessary land was purchased under the powers of the Leeds and Thirsk Act; and the four companies arranged to have the land divided and the necessary station works erected under the control of a special Board or Committee, the members of which were appointed by the four companies concerned. At their first meeting they appointed me secretary of the "Leeds Central Station," and this, of course, led to new work.

The new Board contained some very interesting personages—intimately connected with the early history of railways in England. Among these the most important was Henry Booth, the first secretary of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, the inventor of the coupling screw and of several other useful contrivances connected with railway working.

Booth was a man of remarkable shrewdness and ability; he had a considerable literary turn, and had the germ of the mechanician in him from his earliest years. He might have made a fortune by his coupling screw had he patented it; but he threw this useful invention open to the world. It was, moreover, his suggestion of the multi-tubular boiler, which enabled George Stephenson's Rocket to win the prize at Rainhill, when the amount of the prize was equally divided between Booth and Stephenson. This important invention also was not patented, so that Mr Booth was a man who deserved the gratitude of the entire railway world.

Mr Cubitt was the engineer who represented the Great Northern Company, and Mr Hawkshaw the Leeds and Manchester Company—both very interesting men. It was a treat to observe the quickness with which they saw the points of a case, and the rapidity with which they did their work—brushing away everything that was immaterial and subsidiary—all that could be done by subordinates, who were required diligently to report progress.

Mr Beckett Denison, one of the members for the West Riding, was almost invariably present at the meetings of the Board, and when there he was always appointed to preside. He made an excellent chairman. He kept the discussions closely to the point, allowed no gossip to interfere, saw that the heads of the minutes taken were accurate; and when the business was despatched, which was done quickly but perfectly, he was as cheerful and gossipy as the rest. It was like a fresh breeze of air to get Beckett Denison to appear amongst us. He was a fine, tall, jolly man—full of fun; and yet an excellent man of business.

I remained the secretary of this Board (the Leeds Central Station) until the completion of the arrangements, which was after I left the company's service. It is not necessary to go into the details of a railway secretary's work. One day is like another, as with all routine business. My evenings were all my own. I could do with them what I thought pleasant, profitable, and useful. I have said that I used to write some articles for *The People's* and afterwards for *Howitt's Journal*. Both these publications died, amidst strife, in 1848; and in the course of the following year I entered into another arrangement, which gave me a good deal of literary employment during my leisure hours.

In the summer of 1849, my friend Miss Cushman was invited to spend a few days or weeks at my house; and she asked beforehand "if she might bring a friend with her." "By all means," was my reply. She accordingly brought her friend; and she turned out to be Miss Eliza Cook, the well-known popular poetess. In the course of this visit, Miss Cook told me the reason of her desire to see me. It was because she intended to start a weekly periodical, and she asked me if I would help her with some useful articles—such as I had been accustomed to write for other papers. I agreed, and sent her an article weekly, on such subjects as "The Preservation of Health," "The Practice of Temperance," "Providing against the Evil Day," "Emigration," "Young Men's Mutual Improvement Societies," "Industrial Schools for Young Women," and a few biographic sketches.

Among the latter, I gave, in the fifth number of *Eliza Cook's Journal*, an outline of the life of George Stephenson. I obtained my information principally

from my friend and fellow-official, John Bourne, engineer of the Leeds Northern Railway. Like every Newcastle man, he was a great admirer of the manly character and inborn genius of the father of railway engineering. He had worked under him and with him, on several of the coal lines of the north; and had a great store of anecdotes of his early life, and the difficulties he had surmounted in his efforts after knowledge. Some of them were traditional, and had gathered, in the course of re-telling, accretions which were more or less fictitious—something like the “Three Black Crows.” For instance, the story of his being at first a “trapper” in the coal pit, was not well founded. The story, also, of his having first made love to the mistress and then (being rejected) to her servant, was only a fiction of the imagination. I did not know at the time that these stories were apocryphal, and I gave circulation to Mr Bourne’s narrative. The article was copied into the newspapers, in town and country, and no doubt helped the circulation of Miss Cook’s journal in many ways.

The idea occurred to me, that the life of George Stephenson was one well worth writing out fully—not only because of the striking character of the man, but because of the wonderful impulse which he had given to civilisation by the development of the railway locomotive. There must be many men still living, who could give information about his early life, his growth, his education, his history, and his great achievements. If the opportunity were allowed to pass, a great deal of good example as well as of interesting history, might be utterly lost to future students of the times amidst which we lived. I determined to call upon Robert Stephenson at his

offices in London, during one of the many visits which I then paid to the Metropolis.

I was received by Mr Stephenson very kindly. In answer to my inquiries, he said that there had been some talk of writing the life of his father, but that nothing had been done. Indeed, he had given up the hope of seeing it undertaken. Besides, he doubted whether the subject possessed much interest ; and he did not think the theme likely to attract the attention of literary men of eminence.

“If people get a railroad,” he said, “it is all that they want : they do not care how or by whom it is made. Look at the *Life of Telford*, a very interesting man : it has been published lately, and has fallen still-born from the press.”

I replied that I thought the *Life of Telford* had been very badly done, and, as a biography, contained very little of human interest. If I decided to write the life of his father, I would endeavour to treat of his character as a Man as well as an Engineer.

“Well,” he said, “I think you are right. But I thought it better to warn you against losing your time, your labour, and your money. If, however, you decide to write the Life, let me know, and I shall be very glad to help you.”

This was all that I could hope for at that time. I took advantage of the next Easter holidays, and went down to Newcastle to look over the ground. Mr Stephenson furnished me with a letter to Mr Budden, his business manager at the Forth Street works. I saw him, and he gave me some information. I went to George Stephenson’s birthplace at Wylam, and had an interview with Jonathan Foster, who told me all about “Puffing Billy” and the old colliery

engines. After a few days' inquiry, I found the results I was able to collect were very meagre. The information I wanted existed only in the memories of individuals, from whom it had to be gathered by intercourse, and by slow degrees. Thus I came to the conclusion that the preparation of a satisfactory Life of George Stephenson, from authentic sources, required an actual residence for some period in the districts where he had lived; and as the pursuits in which I was then engaged rendered this altogether out of the question, I abandoned the project—but it turned out that this was only for a time.

To return to my contributions to Eliza Cook. During the first year of her journal, I furnished only one article a week. But as the publication went on, the editress seemed to like my articles more and more. In the second volume, I contributed an article entitled "Drinking," which excited a good deal of interest amongst the temperance people. A deputation waited on Miss Cook, and presented her with a handsomely-bound copy of Peter Burne's *Teetotaller's Companion, or, A Plea for Temperance*, "in acknowledgement of her efforts to promote the benefit of society, and particularly for the excellent article on 'Drinking' in No. 39 of her valuable journal." Miss Cook kindly sent me the present, with this inscription: "As this volume is due to my esteemed friend Dr Smiles rather than to myself, I have sincere pleasure in presenting it to him, with the earnest hope that his benevolence and talent may ever produce, as they do now, good to man and honour to God."

Miss Cook asked me to increase my contributions, and I proceeded accordingly. I wrote stories, novelettes, reviews, travels, articles on domestic life, on

young women, on boys and young men, on benefit societies, on savings banks, on popular education, on temperance, and a large number of brief biographies. Miss Cook was not satisfied. Like Oliver, she still "asked for more"; until in the fourth and fifth volumes of her journal, I must have contributed at least one half of the articles in each number. I turned all my holiday journeys to account. I contributed my "Walk up the Rhine," my visits to Bolton Abbey (that charming resort of Yorkshire people); and, in 1851, after making a journey to Ireland during my annual fortnight's holiday, I communicated the results to the journal in my "Autumn Trip through Munster." This continued for several years, until the middle of 1854, when, the journal getting into new hands in consequence of the illness of Miss Cook, I ceased my contributions, and an end came to that source of employment for my leisure hours.

The only question in which I continued to take a public interest was that of Education. Men were still calling out for the extension of political privileges, although there was every reason to fear that the bulk of grown men were grossly uneducated, even in the first rudiments of learning. More than half the women married at the parish church could not write their own names. Matters were still worse at Bradford, and other towns in the West Riding. Lancashire was even worse than Yorkshire. Agitations were got up to remedy this state of things.

Among others, Dr Hook, the vicar of Leeds, published a pamphlet recommending a system of national education, in which religion should be excluded from the school teaching (but be taught, as in Holland, by

special religious teachers), and that the schools should be supported by local rates, and superintended by committees chosen by the justices of the peace. This was considered by many an exceedingly liberal view at the time. The Doctor urged that churchmen and dissenters should merge their differences, in order, at least, to ensure an efficient school education for the rising generation of children; "for although," he said, "I would not confound moral training with what I consider to be religious education, yet such training may be used as the handmaid of religion, and for want of it, thousands of our fellow-creatures are relapsing into barbarism, and becoming worse than heathen."

On the other hand, the dissenters were at that time opposed to anything in the shape of help by Act of Parliament. They would not have State help; they would not have help from local rates and local management. They insisted that education, as well as religion, should be conferred by voluntary efforts only. But voluntarism was doing next to nothing for education. The only flourishing schools at that time were the schools established by the Church and by Wesleyan congregations, and these were aided by direct subventions from the State. According to the returns published in the minutes of the Committee of Council on Education for 1850, thirty-seven schools (principally built and supported by members of the Church) were receiving about £2280 in Annual Educational Grants; whereas there was only one school belonging to the dissenters in Leeds supported on the purely voluntary principle.

In April 1850 some persons—for the most part belonging to the working class—interested in the progress of Education, and anxious to do away with

this unsatisfactory state of things, desired me to attend a public meeting in the Court House, to support a resolution in favour of the Bill then before the House of Commons, "to promote the secular education of the people of England and Wales." I consented to do so. I also formed part of a deputation to wait upon Dr Hook, and to ask him to attend the meeting. The Doctor received us very kindly; but he said, "I have published my views on the subject, and my appearance on the occasion might possibly be hurtful to the cause. Nevertheless, I wish you every success."

The meeting was held in the Court House on the 11th of April 1850. My old friend, Mr Hamer Stansfeld, presided, and made an excellent speech. In the course of his remarks he said, "It is lamentable to find the point of view from which this educational struggle is regarded by some—that religion is the bar to the progress of education. It is not religion that is to blame, but sectarianism—principles almost opposite in their nature. It is the intent and purpose of Christianity to draw us together and teach us to love one another. It is, alas, the tendency of sectarianism to produce the very opposite results. I would myself that the pure spirit of the Christian religion were interwoven with every thought and word and deed of man, and consequently should prefer the combination of unsectarian religion with education; but should the working-classes prefer a secular scheme, and that the religious part should be left to the care and attention of the parents and the minister of religion, and to the action of the voluntary principle, I would trust them. Educate them upon their own terms—educate them at their own price—educate, educate, educate—and rest assured that, if

once an educated people, they will be all the more likely to be a religious people."

I followed Mr Stansfeld, and moved the first resolution. I believe I made the longest speech of the evening — I say nothing of its value. I was followed by Mr William Brook and others; and the resolutions were carried with immense applause.

It must, however, be added that the Voluntaries, or Anti-State Educationists, did not put in an appearance at this meeting. They made a requisition to the mayor to summon another public meeting in the Cloth Hall Yard, for the purpose of petitioning Parliament against the measure then before the House of Commons. The meeting was held accordingly on the 16th of April; and there the pitched battle was fought. The resolution against the Bill was moved by Alderman Carbutt, and supported by the Rev. Mr Williams, Mr Edward Baines, and others. Mr Hamer Stansfeld moved, and I seconded, an amendment in favour of the Bill: this was ably supported by Mr Councillor Barker, and after much vigorous speaking the amendment was declared to be carried.

This, however, was only the beginning of the agitation. In the following year, two schemes were started at Manchester—one the National Public School Association, of which Mr Cobden was among the principal advocates, and the other the Rev. Mr Richson's plan. The leading system of both was that the public schools were to be maintained by local rates, and subject to responsible local management. I entered again into communication with Mr Cobden, and received from him the following letter, which will explain his views on the subject:—

"EXHIBITION BUILDING, KENSINGTON ROAD,
"LONDON, 10th October 1851.

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"It appears to me that the education question, in its practical shape, is being fought out now in the wards and congregations of Manchester. The 'National' and the 'Manchester and Salford Plan' are those under discussion; and it appears to me that the prevailing form of opinion is in favour of the latter. If so, a private Bill will be applied for, applicable to Manchester only, and will, I have no doubt, be obtained; and in that case it will probably become a model for other places. I do not disguise from myself that the 'Manchester and Salford Plan' will be to a great extent a new endowment of all religions.

"As a Churchman, I could not, of course, pretend that it violates my conscience. But I thought that it would be differently viewed by Dissenters; and in justice to them I made an effort to carry the Secular System. But it seems to me that the latter scheme has been met by the more influential part of the Dissenters with more opposition than the Manchester and Salford Plan; and I therefore consider that for the present it is hopeless to contend against the Church and Dissent.

"So strongly am I impressed with the necessity of some progress being made in the education of the people, that I do not feel myself justified in opposing any plan having that object in view; and therefore, unless the majority of the people of Manchester oppose the local scheme, I shall certainly not do so. If it be carried, I have no doubt Leeds will soon apply for a similar Act.

"I think the course pursued by the Dissenters is most unfortunate for the cause of education, and most unwise with regard to the interests of 'Voluntaryism'; but the latter is their own affair. At one thing I am greatly surprised—that they should so little understand the tendency of public opinion as to dream for a moment that they can prevent *any* and *every* scheme of public education from being adopted. But, as I grow older, I expect less wisdom or consistency from public bodies.—Believe me, in haste, your-
truly,
R. COBDEN."

The agitation went on for some time. Mr Edward Baines (afterwards Sir Edward), the great leader of the "Voluntaries," delivered a lecture in the Stock Exchange Hall of Leeds, urging the adequacy of voluntary effort to educate the rising generation. In fairness to the Public School Association, whose views I advocated, Mr Baines generously permitted me to answer his lecture in the columns of the *Leeds Mercury*, of which he was editor. My answer was afterwards published and circulated gratuitously by the National Public School Association at Manchester. Mr Cobden again wrote to me from Midhurst, Sussex, and said:—

"I beg to thank you for taking up the cudgels for *common sense* and *common prudence*. What an extraordinary spectacle it is to see our friend Baines fighting against *both*! How any man, honest as he undoubtedly is, with eyes open, and walking in the paths of active life, can endeavour to reconcile us to the present state of the education of the masses, passes my comprehension."

And again:—

"Many thanks for your favour and papers. The facts contained in your letter respecting the failures of Voluntaryism (*involuntaryism* would be better) in Leeds, ought to silence our good friend of *The Mercury*. But his sound and acute intellect is evidently under the influence of monomania upon the education question. It is only this that can account for the fallacious way in which he persists in arguing against a *centralised government* scheme, when everybody but himself knows that what we all want is a *parochial* or municipal plan, which he is doing his utmost to prevent us from obtaining.

"In a later article, almost entirely devoted to this argument, he uses the word 'Government' or 'State' about thirty times. How is it possible ever to come to an end in a controversy when one

of the disputants thus persists in starting from fallacious premises? The quotation from Justice Coleridge is the true answer to Mr Baines's school statistics.

"The fact is the children of the poor do not learn enough to enable them in after life to read with ease or pleasure. The schools are often mere pretences for education—sometimes, indeed, put up to prevent somebody else from educating the people. There is too much truth in the remark made by Archbishop Whately at Manchester—that some people join in the education movement for the purpose of thwarting it. If we were half as anxious for the education of the people as we pretend, don't you think we should manage to get over the sectarian impediments that are now allowed to impede us?

"I observe what you say about starting a newspaper in London.* If I were bent upon a speculation in Cockney journalism, I would reserve myself till the compulsory stamp is abolished, which must be ere long. It is too gross a proof of the hypocrisy of our advocacy of education to put fetters on the press and taxes upon the raw materials of its manufacture. When the stamp is off, we shall have papers of all sizes and prices; and the largest circulation will be the London penny and halfpenny *dailies*. These will not take the place of the *Times*, which is now the cheapest paper in the world—talent, size, and cost of production, taken into consideration; but they will supply the wants of those who do not require so expensive and elaborate an article as the *Times*.

"Have you seen the article against the removal of the stamp in the *Edinburgh Review*? It argues that the newspaper proprietors and the public are gainers by the present system of compelling each copy of the paper to be stamped, but giving in return the privilege of retransmission for any number of turns by post. Now, I meet this argument, put

* As the amalgamation of the Railway Company with which I was connected, with two other adjacent companies, was under consideration—which would probably put an end to my services as a railway secretary—I at one time contemplated such an event.

forth by the old-established journals, with this proposal. I will allow all existing newspapers to retain their present privilege of retransmission, provided they continue to stamp their whole impression; allowing all papers hereafter established the option of stamping or not, but giving them the privilege of sending their stamped copies once only, with the same stamp, through the post. How long would the old proprietors continue to argue that the present system is most advantagous for the press and the public?

“The *Reviewer*, who is the conductor of an old established *Free Trade* (in corn) paper, lays great stress on the fact that people retransmit the 5d. papers through the post several times, and continue to read them three or four days after publication. That is—not being able to buy a paper at first hand, they take it second hand. It is about the last article which in America could be sold at any price on such conditions. Poor people, in the village where I am writing (Dunford, Midhurst), are glad to take my tea leaves the day after I have used them; but what a strange argument it would be, if I were to use that fact as a reason why the duty should not be taken off tea!”

Two years after the above meeting held in the Cloth Hall Yard, when the amendment was carried in favour of local rates and local administration, another meeting was called to petition against the Bill then before Parliament, for the promotion of education in cities and boroughs in England. It was held on the 13th of June 1853. I was in London on parliamentary business at the time, but I was afterwards informed that the notice of the meeting had been given in the dissenting chapels, and that the Voluntaries mustered very strongly at the public meeting held in the Coloured Cloth Hall Yard. Mr James Garth Marshall moved the resolution in favour of National Education; an amendment against the

Bill was proposed by Mr Alderman Carbutt, and, being put to the meeting, was declared to be carried. Thus the resolution carried at the first public meeting was negatived by that carried at the second public meeting held two years later.

I may here give a further communication received from Mr Cobden. I believe the first part of the letter refers to some articles which I was solicited to write for a Glasgow newspaper, called (I think) *The Constitutional*, in which I recommended the adoption of some method of local legislation, by which much expense might be saved, and the time of the Imperial Parliament greatly economised. The idea of bringing numbers of witnesses from the remotest parts of the empire, on some Gas Bill, or Drainage Bill, or Water Bill, or Railway Bill, seemed to me absurd, and I cited many reasons for the adoption of my proposed measure. Hence Mr Cobden's reference to it.

"MIDHURST, 17th November 1853.

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"I agree with you in the tendency of both your articles.

"As respects local legislation, I think it would be a great step in your direction if we had general Acts passed, applicable to the current wants of towns or districts, the provisions of which might be applied voluntarily by the majority of the locality, in the way in which the Municipal Corporation Act can be applied to a town. But I would make it more easy than by a reference to the Privy Council: and here your idea of local legislatures might be brought to bear. For instance, why should not we have a general lighting, watering, improving, educating, etc., Act?—each containing provisions applicable to *any* locality? But the truth is, our governing class is at heart (notwithstanding great professions) not fond of increasing the power of local self-government.

“As respects your other article on Strikes, I think what is generally wanted is a more thorough recognition of *the rights of individuals*. Depend on it, there is a spice of despotism at the bottom of all this intervention by combined bodies in the concerns of individuals—and you know how abjectly subservient the working-classes are to the dictation of a trades-union junta. I think we shall not get right till there is a revolt against all such organisations, whether on one side or another, in the interest of *liberty*--PERSONAL LIBERTY. The much greater respect felt between both classes and individuals for one another in these social questions in America, arises from the far higher respect felt for the personal liberty of Man, *as such*, than we, with all our boasting, really feel. The vices of a hard, overbearing regime, natural to our aristocratic form of government, enter into all the relations of life, both social and political, and no class is free from the taint. We are an overbearing people, to other nations and to ourselves.

“By the way, apropos of our old question, which lies at the bottom of all others, I observe that our friend Baines, in his last week’s paper, has a letter to prove how much progress we are making in schooling, and he gives some statistics to show that we have, during the last eighteen or twenty years, increased our schools to the extent of 7000; and he takes credit to the *voluntary system* for all this. But this is just the time during which our wretchedly imperfect government system has been at work, and in which we have made Government Grants to the extent of a million or a million and a half sterling for building schools, which would go a great way towards erecting all the school-houses named. But many of these schools, so far from giving education, are really little better than pretences for *not* educating the people.—Yours very truly,

“R. COBDEN.”

In this position the educational question continued for many years; and there is little doubt that the agitation in Lancashire and Yorkshire ripened the

opinions of many leading men on the subject. At last, when Household Suffrage in towns was granted by the Conservative Government of Lord Derby in 1867, and it was found that there must be a measure of National Education, in order to enable the new constituencies properly to use their powers, the prejudices of the Dissenters in favour of voluntary education were suddenly swept to one side by public opinion; and Mr Forster, member for Bradford, by a rare union of tact, wisdom, and common sense, introduced and carried his measure for the long-wished-for education of the English people. It embodied nearly all that the National Public School Association had so fruitlessly demanded years before; and on the whole, it has till now worked fairly well. In course of time, its defects, to which all things human are liable, will doubtless be remedied.

It is curious to see how public bodies can so summarily "jump Jim Crow." Some forty years ago, the English Dissenters insisted that public education could only be obtained as the result of voluntary effort. Then, when it became manifest that voluntary education was giving an advantage to the Established Church (whose members were more liberal with their money), they repudiated voluntarism, in regard to the education of the young; and at last they have become the most vehement advocates of State- and Rate-supported education in the country. The Dissenters now ardently support Board Schools, while Churchmen have assumed the position (which Dissenters have abandoned) of Voluntary Educationists!

During the last three years that I lived in Leeds, I remained quietly within my shell. I took no part in public meetings of any sort. I was

occupied in pushing forward the amalgamation of the Leeds Northern Company with the York, Newcastle, and Berwick, and the York and North Midland Companies. The first-named company had extended its lines into Durham, thus linking itself to the Stockton and Darlington Railway, the Clarence Railway, the Stockton and Hartlepool Railway, and the York, Newcastle, and Berwick Railway. Steps were taken to extend the line from Ferryhill on the Clarence line, by Durham, Chester-le-Street, and along the Team Valley, to Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The line was surveyed, the plans were deposited, the public along the valley generally supported the project; and there seemed every reason to believe that the Act would be carried, but unfortunately, the line, as first laid out, came too near the Durham Observatory. The working of the heavy locomotives so near would cause some aberration of the instruments, and the directors of the Observatory resolved to oppose the measure. To get rid of their opposition, an agreement was entered into to the effect that if the Act were granted, the line as laid out would not be made, but a deviation through the city of Durham would be applied for in a future session of Parliament. This proved fatal to the Bill. The agreement was read before the committee of the House of Commons, and there was an end of the application.

In the next session of Parliament, however, supported by the locality, new plans were prepared, avoiding the Observatory, and proposing to supply a much more convenient station in the High Street of Durham. The directors of the York, Newcastle, and Berwick Company, seeing the probability of a new and rival line being established in the heart of this

important district, wisely resolved to bring the competition to an end, by entering into an arrangement for the amalgamation, not only of the Leeds Northern Railway, but of the York and North Midland Railway, which extended to Hull, Doncaster, Normanton, and Leeds. Conferences of directors accordingly took place. Offers were made, discussed, altered, and improved; and at last were laid before the shareholders of the respective companies. These negotiations extended over many months, and even years; and finally, when everything was settled, it was my lot to draw up the report for the proprietors of my company, urging the necessity of their giving assent to the amalgamation.

I felt, when signing the final report, as if it were driving the last nail into my own coffin. But it was the best thing to be done for all parties—for the public as well as for the shareholders; and I did the work to the best of my power. Eventually, the shareholders of all the companies agreed to the amalgamation, on a certain clearly understood division of the net profits. The final resolutions were carried; the Leeds Northern Railway came to an end; and I prepared to go over to Newcastle with the books, to have the shares registered in the books of the amalgamated company.