# AT THE FORTH BRIDGE.*

WIFIE an' me took boat at Leith,
    An' steam'd awa richt merrilie,
An' far behind us left Inchkeith,
    As squat's a deid deuk in the sea ;
We could hae danced a-board that boat,
We were sae proud to be afloat !

For tho' land-lubbers baith are we,
    We aye hae caved within the spell
O' the wide-spreadin', witchin' sea,
    An' lo'e it mair than maist could tell ;
Sae Bell she laughs, an' cries to me,
"Jim !  I feel splendid !  Hoo do ye?"

In sooth, it was a glorious day !
    Ane in the better end o' June,
Sunshine was a'where, and in play
    Saft breezes round us sang in tune !
The glow o' health in Bella's cheek
To neck an' brow at ance did streik !

Newhaven on the south we pass'd,
    The Chain Pier, Granton, Cramond, too ;
Syne by Dalmeny's woods sae vast.
    Westward afore we kenn'd we flew !
"This boat cowes a' for speed," says Bella,
"Young Galloway's a clever fella !"

*Forth Bridge—Begun in April 1883, and completed in seven years. Its designers were Sir John Fowler and Sir Benjamin Baker; its builders, Sir Thomas Tancred and Sir William Arrol, of Glasgow. Its full length is one and a half miles, and it reduced the railway journey between Edinburgh and Perth from 69 to 48 miles, and of course those between Edinburgh and Dundee, Aberdeen, etc., proportionately. It is in all respects a stupendous structure. Total cost, over £3,000,000, and that for its connections £800,000. The steel plates used in the structure weighed 54,000 tons, the rivets used numbered 8,000,000, and the estimated weight of the masonry was 250,000 tons. Over 3,500 workmen were at one time employed in its construction.

" Noo for the Bridge !—the Bridge !—the Bridge !
        The Bridge, Jim, we hae come to see !
Eh ! ! what a Monster ! I allege,
        An uglier monster couldna be !
An Alligator-crocodile,
An' Dromedary—*in ae pile!*"

Nearer we come : The " Monster's " legs
        We mark doun-planted i' the Firth,
As strecht across to Fife it dreggs
        Its lang length frae its hole, or " earth,"
Deep-hidden in the south shore hichts
That shut out fair Dalmeny's sichts !

Nearer : "Oh, Jim ! it disna move !
        It is nae mammoth brute when dune !
But see that train !" shouts Bell, my love,
        " It's gaun to cross this ship abune !
What greater ferlie noo remains
Than crossing seas in railway trains !"

" THIS IS AN AGE OF STEEL, my dear,"
        I sighed when passing 'neath the Bridge,
"And so this FEAT—but here's the Pier—
        Come ! let's ashore an' tounward trudge !
I'm hungrier than a caged-up hawk—
The Brig'll stand till we come back !"

Says Bella, while we ate our steak,
        " Was not yon train an awfu' sicht ?
Lord ! they be daurin' men wha take
        A rin throo air at sich a hicht !
I'd raither flee in a balloon
Out owre the hills as far's the moon !"

Again, when we had stowed our wames :
        " Jim ! tell me this.   Hoo did they do't ?
There's no, I'm sure, 'tween Tay and Thames,
        Anither Biggin to match to't ?—
Of a' the sichts that e'er I saw,
That Brig's the awfu'est o' them a' !"

Return'd anon unto the Pier,
     We sat us doun upon the shore,
An' lang an' silent gazed we here
     Upon the Bridge stretch'd us before ;
We had nae choice but sit an' stare,
     For we had eyes, and IT was there !

At length we frae our reverie woke,
     I look'd at Bell, she look'd at me,
And instant frae her sweet lips broke
     Thae rousing exclamations free—
" Lord ! what a Brig ! it's terrible !
It's fearfu' ! awfu' ! horrible ! "

Just at that moment, frae each end
     The Bridge, a lang-drawn train did start,
Advanced, and, near its middle bend,
     Met, an' shot by each ither smart !
Bell sat wi' open mou' an' stared.
     As if the world's last knell she'd heard !

" Thank God they're saved !" she cried at last,
     " I thocht them lost between the humps !
But no ! they met an' smoothly pass'd,
     Like twa train'd courtiers in their pumps !
They couldna hae behaved much better
Tho' etiquette-bred to the letter !

Then we gaed back alang the Pier,
     An' paid our fares on board again,
Scanning, as lang's it did appear,
     The wondrous pile stretch'd owre the main,
And wishing, when we cam' to Leith,
It had been doun as far's Inchkeith !

**by James Lumsden aka 'Samuel Mucklebackit'**

**1905**