THE RUDIMENTS OF HYDRAULIC ENGINEERING, VOL. III, PART II

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The rudiments of hydraulic engineering, Vol. III, Part II by G. R. Burnell

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G. R. BURNELL

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HYDRAULIC ENGINEERING.

BY G. R. BURNELL,

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PREFACE.

THE lengthened delay which has taken place in the publication of the third volume has been occasioned by the small portion of time which my professional engagements have allowed me to devote to literary pursuits, and which time has been obliged to be divided between this and several other works. In order that no further delay should occur, I have relinquished the task of completing that portion of the present volume relating to Hydraulic Engineering to Mr. Burnell.

HENRY LAW.

 Duke Street, Adelphi. 19th May, 1852.

In accepting the task of completing the portion of the deservedly popular Treatise on Civil Engineering which Mr. Law's engagements have forced him to decline, I would fain request the public to extend to me the indulgence usually accorded to those who find themselves called upon to endeavour to fill in an outline sketched by another hand. In this particular instance it has been my aim to confine my observations within the range of the synopsis inserted by Mr. Law at the commencement of the first volume. Insensibly they have far exceeded the limits he had proposed, and this branch of the work has attained a development perhaps greater than it merits in proportion to the remainder. But the very nature of the phenomena connected with Hydraulic Engineering is so complex that these appeared absolutely to require to be examined in detail, in order to arrive at a correct general view of the subject; and, lengthy as this portion of the Treatise may appear, it is to be feared that much has still been

omitted-many objects of study and investigation rather hinted at than explained.

To facilitate the researches of those who may be disposed to pursue the investigation of this most interesting branch of the profession of Civil Engineering, a list of the most celebrated authors who have treated of its details has been The list is far from being complete, but it contains the names of all who have fallen under my own personal observation. I have drawn from many of these sources largely, and have endeavoured to quote my authorities when there seemed to be any originality in the observations. Yet there are doubtlessly many instances in which I may not have acknowledged the full extent of my obligations. The fact is, that, in the domain of the exact sciences, so many discoveries have become public property, so to speak, that they seem to form the staple of our knowledge, and to be used without reference to their authors. By a species of tacit consent, when a law has once been admitted, it seems that it is the right of the next comer to use it with the same freedom as the discoverer; and so many such laws are being every day added to our stock, that in the end a kind of confusion prevails as to the parties to whom we are really indebted. It has, however, been my object in all cases to render honour to whom it was due.

Personally, I regret that the limits of the Treatise did not allow a more lengthened investigation of the subject of the supply of water to towns, and the application of the sewage. These are subjects so prominently before the public at present, and so many questionable doctrines have been promulgated at the expense of the nation, with respect to them, that it behaves every engineer, as far as lies in his power, to counteract the mischief it has been endeavoured to effect, and to recall the attention of the public to the real merits of the case. To do so completely would require another field than a Rudimentary Treatise; nevertheless, even in it, there is both room and reason to call attention to some of the theories

propounded by incompetent persons. The misfortune in England is, that if an investigation into any subject be undertaken, it is usually made in the manner so pleasantly described by Beaumarchais, and "if a mathematician be required we take a dancing master;" or literally, if an inquiry be made, and any subsequent measures adopted, in subjects connected with engineering, the parties it has lately been the custom to consult, are the omniscient barristers-atlaw, not those who have devoted their whole lives to the study of the questions it may be desirable to elucidate. And it is also to be observed, that the two professions of Engineer and Barrister-at-Law are precisely the only two learned professions which can be taken up without examination or diploma. The remedy to so great an evil is hard to discover, unless it lie in the freedom of the press. Unfortunately, the action of the latter is slow, and much mischief is done before the public can be fairly roused to the consequences of following the instructions of its blind guides. Nevertheless, " Magna est veritas et prevalebit!"

GEORGE R. BURNELL.

14, Lincoln's Inn Fields, July 15th, 1852.

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