

MR. WILLIAM TOOKE, F.R.S., was the second son of the Rev. William Tooke, an English Divine, who was the Chaplain of the factory of the Russian Company at St. Petersburg, where he, among other works, wrote the 'Life of Catharine II.,' 'A View of the Russian Empire.'

William Tooke, junior, was born at St. Petersburg, on the 22nd November, 1777, and, after the usual course of study, was admitted as a solicitor, and practised his profession for many years with considerable success, acquiring a high reputation.

Science, art, and literature had for him great attractions, and he devoted to them all the spare time of the best years of his life. He was attached to the society of the literary men of his day, and there were few persons better known than he was as the founder and promoter of literary and scientific associations throughout the country. In conjunction with Lord Brougham, Dr. Birkbeck, Mr. Grote, and others, he took a very active part in the establishment of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, of which, for some years, he acted as the Treasurer. He was for many years a leading Member of the Society of Arts, filling consecutively almost every post in connection with the Council, and holding for a time the position of President, after the decease of the Prince Consort.

He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, and a Member of several other societies. From 1832 to 1837 he represented in Parliament the borough of Truro.

In early life he contributed, anonymously, many articles to the Magazines, and he edited an edition of Churchill's Poems, with notes and a Life of the Author, which was favourably reviewed by Southey, and was subsequently reprinted with Mr. Tooke's name on the title page. He also published, in 1855, a compilation on French History, entitled 'The Monarchy of France, its Rise, Progress, and Fall,'¹ a curious book in these times, if read with a good knowledge of the present state of Imperial France.

At a very early period in the history of the Institution of Civil Engineers, Mr. Tooke, who had been brought by his professional engagements into contact with Mr. Telford, became interested in the progress of the young Society; he attended the meetings as a visitor, and in 1828, when there was a question of obtaining a Royal Charter, he not only gave good advice, but he obtained the Royal grant with comparatively very small cost. In 1838 he was formally nominated the Honorary Solicitor of the Institution, and was annually re-elected during the remainder of his life. He was also elected an Honorary Member in 1849. He was ever ready to give his best assistance in every way, and in the most liberal manner, and the Society has still the advantage of the same kind

¹ Library Inst. C.E.

co-operation from his professional successors, Messrs. Tooke, Hallows, and Price.

Mr. Tooke was a man of great energy, of strong party feeling of the old school of politics; he delighted in doing good practically, and spared neither time nor labour to accomplish his object. He was deservedly very successful; and at his decease, which occurred September 20th, 1863, in the 86th year of his age, he left a blank in a large circle which will be long felt.

MR. THOMAS EVANS BLACKWELL was born at Devizes, on the 28th of July, 1819. His early mathematical training and his best impressions were derived from his godfather, the Rev. Thomas Evans, at that time Vicar of Froxfield—the “Felix Ford” of the early numbers of the ‘Mechanics’ Magazine,’ and who was formerly connected with the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. Young Blackwell having obtained a liberal education, commenced his professional career under his father, the late Mr. John Blackwell, who was for many years Engineer to the Kennet and Avon Canal Company. Thus he had the advantage of a large share of active out-door employment on the works of that navigation, and on the rivers Kennet and Avon, as well as a thorough training in mathematics and in the theory of the profession. His attention to the works intrusted to his care, and the talent he exhibited in design and construction, procured him many friends; and on the death of his father, he was, at the early age of twenty-one years, appointed Engineer to the Kennet and Avon Canal Company. In 1840-41, during the diversion of the canal, near Bath, for the purpose of forming a portion of the Great Western Railway, in an adjacent deep cutting, he shared a deep responsibility, in conjunction with the late Mr. I. K. Brunel, the Engineer-in-Chief, and Mr. Frere, the resident Engineer, in keeping open the navigation.

Mr. Blackwell’s practical sagacity enabled him to see, at an early period in the development of the railway system, that on such a line of country as that between London and Bristol, the railway must eventually supersede canal and river carrying; and he recommended the Directors of the Kennet and Avon Canal Company to convert it into a railway. In 1845, he was instructed to prepare the necessary plans for an application to Parliament for this purpose. This scheme, which would have provided a second line of railway between Bristol and Reading, was strongly opposed by the Great Western Railway Company, who, for a time, postponed the construction of the new line by the purchase of the canal. Railways running through nearly the same line of country have since been made, of one of which

[1863-64. N.S.]

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