

and confidential coadjutor of Mr. Beardmore. From his acuteness as a mathematician, and clear workmanlike mode of dealing with the practical business of an Engineer, Mr. Despard won the confidence and esteem of all with whom he was brought in contact. In his private relations to a widowed mother and a numerous younger family, his character was a model; and those who were acquainted with his affectionate and generous disposition, can estimate the void caused by his almost sudden and early death, on the 19th of March, 1863, in the 32nd year of his age.

Mr. Despard was elected a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers on the 4th of February, 1862; but for many years previously he had been a constant attendant at the meetings, and had taken advantage of the other facilities for professional advancement afforded by the Institution. On all occasions he never failed to acknowledge the great benefits that he had derived from access to the library, and from the privilege of being present at the meetings.

Mr. JAMES FENTON was born at Dunkenny, Forfarshire, on the 29th of August, 1815, and after serving an apprenticeship at the works of Messrs. James Cook and Co., Glasgow, as a mechanical Engineer, and under Mr. Blackadder (M. Inst. C.E.) as a Civil Engineer, he, in June, 1837, received an appointment under Mr. I. K. Brunel (M. Inst. C.E.), on the Great Western Railway, which was then in course of construction. In 1841, he became the resident Engineer and Locomotive Superintendent of the Manchester and Leeds line, where he remained for nearly five years, and on retiring he was presented by the workmen with a handsome silver vase and drinking-cup, and by the two engine-drivers on the Halifax branch with a silver snuff-box. In 1845, he undertook the position of Acting Engineer of the Leeds and Thirsk Railway, for which the Bill had just been obtained; but after remaining in the service of that Company for about eighteen months, and previous to the completion of the works, he entered into an arrangement with the proprietors of the Railway Foundry, at Leeds, then becoming known as builders of locomotive engines. Among the various works he executed while in that position may be specially mentioned the 'Jenny Lind' class of engine, designed with the view of combining simplicity of construction, with steadiness when running at high speeds. So highly were these engines thought of on some lines, that they were adopted as the type for all passenger engines, until by increase in the traffic heavier engines were required. Mr. Fenton also, whilst at the Railway Foundry, constructed and launched one of the largest landing-stages in the kingdom, that at New Holland, where the passengers by the Manchester and Sheffield Railway cross to Hull. On leaving the Railway Foundry

he was presented by the employés with a tea and coffee service in silver.

In 1851 he joined the Low Moor Company, as consulting Engineer, a position which he retained to his death; and there he had ample opportunity of meeting all the Engineers of reputation, and this soon brought him a large practice. As a witness he had considerable facility for explaining mechanical details in a popular manner. His last professional engagement was from the War Office, having been appointed to settle the question of compensation to the Elswick Ordnance Company. During the attendance on this business in London, he caught a severe cold, which hastened his end. He died at Leamington, where he had for some time resided for the benefit of his health, on the 22nd of April, 1863, at the early age of 47 years. His remains were conveyed to Low Moor, where they were interred on Monday, the 27th of April, and were followed to the grave by the principals and staff of the Low Moor Iron Company, together with a large number of the leading railway Engineers, and of his friends from various parts of the country. Mr. Fenton's loss will be much felt by many young Engineers, as he was always ready with his advice and assistance, and he was deservedly beloved and respected. Mr. Fenton was elected a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers in 1849, and he contributed to the Proceedings a "Description of an Improved Form of Safety-Valve, for Steam Boilers."¹ He was one of the originators of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, of Birmingham, in 1847, in the management of which he took a very active part, and he was for five or six years one of the Vice-Presidents of that Institution.

MR. JOSHUA FIELD, F.R.S., was born at Hackney, in the year 1786. His father was largely engaged in the corn and seed trade, which he carried on in Lower Thames Street, where he had warehouses and a residence; but his family, which was large, chiefly resided at Hackney, then a village, quite separate from London. At seven years of age Joshua Field was sent to a boarding school at Harlow, in Essex, then conducted by the Rev. J. Brown, and he remained there until he was sixteen. He very early displayed a love for mechanical pursuits, collecting tools and learning to use them; and, as with most young mechanics, clocks and watches offered the readiest means of exercising this assumed vocation. The school clock being out of order, and Mr. Brown having heard of his pupil's skill on the watches of some of the neighbouring farmers, asked if he thought he could mend it, and on permission being given him to try, he made so

¹ *Vide Minutes of Proceedings Inst. C.E., vol. xv., p. 33.*