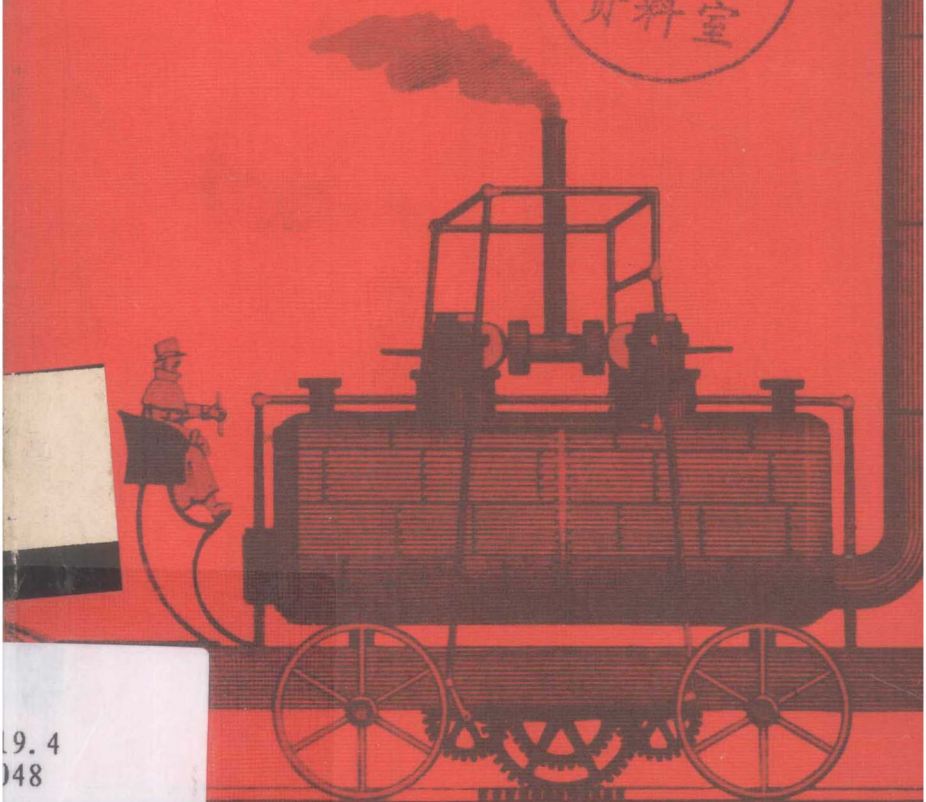


THEN AND THERE

RAILWAY REVOLUTION 1825-1845

M. GREENWOOD



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THEN AND THERE SERIES

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Railway Revolution

1825-1845

MARJORIE GREENWOOD, M.A.

Illustrated from contemporary sources by

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The drawing on page 43 is redrawn from the cover of G.F. Westcott's *The British Railway Locomotive 1803-1853*, by permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

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TO THE READER

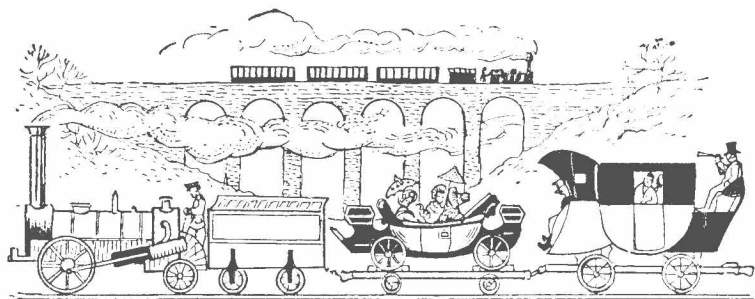
EVERY fact in this book comes from some record written at the time the book is describing; nothing has been invented in these pages, which seek to be a true record of the life and thought of people who themselves planned and made and travelled on the first railways. What they wrote are original sources to which historians have to go back for their information. You will find out more about these original sources by reading pages 35 and 36. If you want to write a historical play or novel, see if you too can take all your detail exactly and accurately from original sources.

In the same way all the pictures in this book are based on a drawing made by someone who lived then and there.

By studying what people said in word and picture about themselves, you will come to feel at home in one 'patch' of the history of the past and really live with the group of people as they thought and worked then and there. And gradually you will be able to fill in more patches of history.

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THIS book is about transport in 1845, that is, how goods and people moved about England more than 100 years ago. You will remember that, at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, there were new machines and new ways of making things—a change which is called the Industrial Revolution. There were also changes in transport so that by 1845 ways of moving things were different from what they had been in 1760.

You will all have talked about what you are going to be when you leave school and some of you will already have it planned. Have you thought of being an engine driver? In 1845, a fourteen-year-old boy, James M'Connel, thought the most exciting job of all was to be a railway engineer, a man who actually built railways, who decided where the lines should be laid and where the stations should be built. Perhaps you would not have thought of THAT job, because, having so many railways in England to-day, we do not build many new ones. But in the England of 1845, when James was a boy, new lines were being planned and built in every direction. Indeed, so many lines were planned in that year, and so many people were talking and thinking about railway building, that we often call it 'the Year of the Railway Mania.' You will understand why later.

Of course, railways were not invented in 1845; the FIRST PUBLIC RAILWAY was opened between Stockton and Darlington in 1825. This was not the first time a locomotive drawing trucks had run on rails, as you will find out later, but it was the first PUBLIC railway. By 1845, hundreds of miles of public railways had been built.

We can learn about the early days of railways if we visit James M'Connel, who in 1845 was staying with his grandparents at Ardwick Hall, Manchester. You will understand later that James was very lucky in being able to find out so much for himself about railways. But first just a word about Manchester at that time.

To-day Manchester is one of the largest areas of houses and factories in this country. In every direction the original town of Manchester has joined with the towns and villages around it until it forms one huge mass of buildings and there are very few open spaces. In 1845, however, there were fields around the smaller town and Ardwick Hall was on the edge of it. The house was built in the time before the railways.

Like James himself, you will be wanting to hear about the early railways. So let us hear what James's grandfather, Mr. Kennedy, has to say about himself, for it will show you something of how railways came to be built. To-day when a new aeroplane flies it is because clever designers and civil engineers have worked together to make it, but you will see that this was not so in 1845 when a new railway line was opened. The odd thing about Mr. Kennedy, you may think, is that, although he was one of the men who planned the first railway from Manchester, he was not an expert in the making of roads or canals. He was a cotton manufacturer. You will learn in the story how he came to plan the railway.

JOHN KENNEDY TELLS HOW THE LIVERPOOL AND MANCHESTER RAILWAY WAS BUILT

James was waiting impatiently for his grandfather in the drawing-room of Ardwick Hall. He knew that his grandfather had been to a very important meeting that afternoon about the railway and he wanted to ask all about it. Indeed, his grandfather had promised to tell him when he returned. He was looking at the book which his Uncle John had given him for Christmas, when his grandmother, Mrs. Kennedy, spoke to him.

"James, stop turning over the pages of that book! Choose one page and read from it."

"But, Grandmother, I must turn over the pages of THIS book to find what I want."

"What is the book then?"

"It is the RAILWAY COMPANION, Grandmother, and I am trying to find out how long it takes to travel to London."

"Always railways, railways, railways! James, why can't you read another book?"

"Oh no, Mother," said Uncle John, "let the boy read Bradshaw, if he wants to."

"Wasting his time, I call it," said Mrs. Kennedy.

"Hardly that, Mamma. Everyone ought to be able to find out train times to-day. Can you find the time of my train to-morrow in your guide, James? I am going to Liverpool in the morning and hope to finish my business there about two o'clock."

"Oh yes, Uncle, I think so. Yes, here it is."

(You will find what James was looking at on page 78.)

"The train in the morning, Uncle, goes at 9 o'clock and there is a first-class one back at 4.15 p.m."

"What time does the train reach Manchester, James, for we shall want to know when to send the carriage?" said Aunt Eliza, who was Uncle John's wife.

"It does not say that; only the time it leaves Liverpool," replied James.

"Oh no, Eliza," laughed Uncle John, "Mr. Bradshaw knows better than to put in the time of arrival. There might be a cow on the line!"

"Oh, the poor creature!" said old Mrs. Kennedy.

"It doesn't often happen, Mother," said Uncle John, "not now that strong wooden fences are being put up along the line. So one day Mr. Bradshaw may be able to print the time of arrival of the trains."



The North-Western Railway Company is Formed

At this moment a fine horse pulled a carriage up the drive of Ardwick Hall, and James's grandfather came in. When he was settled by the fire, James said:

"I am glad that you have come home, Grandfather. Please tell me about your meeting this afternoon."

"It wasn't very exciting, James; just a lot of men sitting around a table signing papers. All the talking was done weeks ago. To-day the chief *shareholders*¹ of the Grand Junction Railway came to meet us of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. We have agreed to join our two railways together and call them in future the North-Western Railway. This was all set out on pieces of paper which we signed this afternoon. By signing these papers we have put the railways of this part of England under one management. But I was just thinking, James, that this meeting this afternoon was not as exciting as the one I went to in 1824 in Liverpool."

"What did you do there, Grandfather?"

"Oh, that is where it all began. That's where we planned the first railway in this district."

"Will you tell me about that meeting?"

James had heard much of it before, but he loved hearing his grandfather talking about the past. Mr. Kennedy liked telling his grandson, so he began:

"It was because I was a cotton manufacturer that I was interested in transport and there were many others who thought as I did. Do you know from where we get our raw cotton, James?"

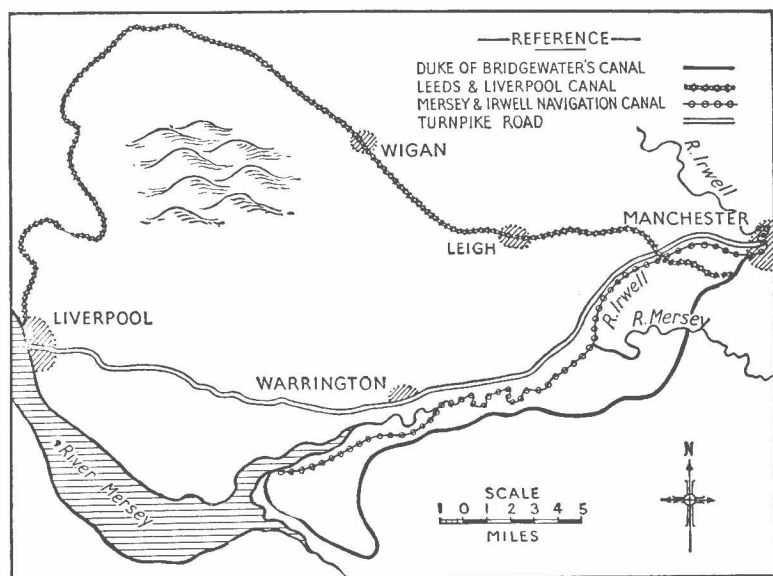
"From America, Grandfather, don't you? It comes in ships to Liverpool and then by train to Manchester."

¹ You will find words printed like *this* in the Glossary on pages 91 and 92.

“That is right to-day; but this is 1845! What happened before 1830, in the days when there was no railway?”

“Oh, I see what you mean, Grandfather. There wasn’t any way of getting it there.”

“Yes, there was. At first the bales of cotton had come on packhorses and in wagons but the roads were so bad that men had built canals and deepened the River Mersey. That was fifty years ago; but the boats were small and as we built more machinery and drove it by steam, we wanted more cotton from Liverpool. There were four ways of getting it to Manchester in 1820, as you see on this map.



“The *turnpike* road had been repaired but not many bales of cotton could be loaded on one cart and it took a whole day on the journey. More bales of cotton could travel in a barge on the rivers and canals than in a wagon

but they took days on the journey and sometimes weeks. Why! men said that it took longer to move a bale of cotton from Liverpool to Manchester than it took the boat to cross the Atlantic Ocean, but perhaps that was an exaggeration.

"You must not think that we just decided to build the railway, James," his grandfather continued. "When I think of all the bother we had to get the Liverpool-Manchester line built, I wonder how we did it! You can't understand to-day, when we take the railways for granted, how different it was in 1824 when we started."

"Surely everyone wanted the railways to be built?" said James in a surprised voice.

"Indeed they did not," laughed Mr. Kennedy. "There was a great deal of opposition."

(Can you think of any reasons why people tried to stop the building of a railway? You will find other reasons, besides those mentioned by Mr. Kennedy, on page 80.)

"You must understand," Mr. Kennedy went on, "that a railway must run as straight as possible, otherwise it will not save time. So it will run over land belonging to many different men and you have to persuade them all to sell a strip of land to the railway company.

"As one man, by refusing to sell, could stop the whole line from being built, we had to have powers to force everyone to sell as we wanted. The only way of forcing them was by getting an Act passed by Parliament giving us this power. We also wanted to be able to pass over private land with our tools and machinery, for the railway was often some way from the roads. Now it costs money to get an Act through Parliament, so on May 24th, 1824, those of us who were interested in the scheme held a meeting to decide how we could collect the money."

The Liverpool Meeting, 1824

"I can well remember that meeting," said Mr. Kennedy. "There were several men who later became famous, but on that day our only thought was to float this company and get our railway built. Everyone was tired of the hold the canals had over our business and wanted to end it."

"What do you mean by 'float a company'?" asked James.

"Oh, John, you do use odd words for the lad to understand," said Mrs. Kennedy.

"No, my dear," replied Mr. Kennedy. "The lad is growing up and must learn these affairs, even if he is only going to drive an engine and not manage his father's factory!"

"Floating a company, James, means that we were starting one. I suppose that it comes from the days when several men would arrange at a meeting to pay for the building and equipping of a ship, and then they would share the profits. That was just what we were doing. We thought that we would need £300,000 to get our Act through Parliament and build our railway; so we split it into 3,000 lots of £100 each (or *shares* as they are called). Do you understand that if 3,000 men each put £100 into our scheme, we would have our money? Then later, the men who had put their money into our company would share the profits, which we hoped our railway would earn when it started to run. Of course, some men put more than £100 into the company, so we did not have 3,000 men with shares (or shareholders as they are called)."

"And did you have some shares, Grandfather?" asked James.

“Oh yes, I did. As some of us came from Manchester and some from Liverpool, we set some shares apart for men from these places, and the rest for the land-owners along the route. We hoped that they would be more likely to sell their land if they thought that they might earn money in the future by doing so.”

“So that is what you did at the meeting, Grandfather?”

“Yes. We also drew up a *Prospectus*, or list of advantages of our railway line. We hoped with this to encourage men to lend us their money by showing them how quickly they might get a share of the profits.

“And, as I have already told you, we were hoping to cut out the canals. So we listed the four ways in which the railway would be better than the canals. Like this:

1. The railway will be 33 miles shorter than the canal.
2. The journey between Liverpool and Manchester will take between 4 and 5 hours, whereas by canal it takes at least 36 hours.
3. We are offering to the merchants of either town a regular service which will run every day and their goods will not be delayed by ice in winter and low water in summer as they have been on the canal.
4. We are offering to carry goods one-third cheaper than by the canal.

“And you made it sound very attractive, I’m sure,” laughed Uncle John.

“Of course,” replied Mr. Kennedy, “But then, it was attractive. We had Share Certificates printed to show how much money each man had invested in the company, and very nice they looked too, with a picture of Britannia on the top pointing to her railways.”

There is a picture of one on the next page.



A Share Certificate

“What about the branch lines, Father?” said Uncle John. “Tell him about them.”

“You planned branch lines even then?” asked Aunt Eliza.

“Oh yes. Most of us could see that one day there would be railway lines running in all directions across the country. Besides, there were places not far from our line between Manchester and Liverpool, like Bolton and St. Helens, which had goods to send away.”

“Why ever those places, Father?” laughed Aunt Eliza.

“Good gracious, Eliza, don’t you remember that they had recently opened up coal mining at St. Helens? And Bolton was already becoming a centre of cotton spinning and needed raw cotton brought by some other means

than packhorses. There were many farmers too who, we hoped, would buy lime and manure and carry it on our trains. Then, too, we hoped to carry people as in a stage coach."

"I thought that was why trains ran," said James, "—to carry people."

"Oh no," replied Mr. Kennedy. "The Stockton and Darlington line was built only for goods but we planned some trucks for people, though no one expected quite so many people to use them!"

(Have you noticed that Mr. Kennedy talks of 'trucks' for the people? If you look at the pictures of the early carriages on pages 60–61, you will see that they are very different from those you have travelled on.)

"So you have always carried passengers, Grandfather?"

"Yes, in the early years, to our surprise, we had more money from the passengers than from the goods! And during the first weeks, we could not carry any goods at all, there were so many people wanting to ride in the trains! There were plenty of visitors to see our railway. Many of them were men who were thinking of starting a line in their own district."

(If you wish to know some of the things said by these people about the Liverpool and Manchester Railway when their Acts were being examined by Parliament, you will find them on page 84.)

"So we planned our track of rails," continued Mr. Kennedy, "and the trucks to carry the goods. But how were the trucks to be drawn? That was not yet settled."

"But you would have a steam engine," said James.

"No, you must not think that all of us had thought that a steam engine would pull the trucks. I did, because I was

something of an engineer, and besides, I knew James Watt and had heard of the early experiments which had been carried on."

"But what did the others think would draw the trucks?" asked James in a puzzled voice.

"They thought of laying rails, and then letting horses pull the trucks along! This had already been done for carrying coal in many parts of England."



"But you did have steam engines, Grandfather?" said James worriedly.

"We managed to persuade the others before the line was finished. Four of us, Sandar, Ellis, Booth and myself, went to see the Stockton to Darlington Railway. We saw steam engines working there, so we persuaded the others to let George Stephenson act as our engineer. We told how we had travelled in a truck at ten miles an hour."

(If you wish to know more about the early use of trucks running on rails for carrying coal, you will find it on page 37.)