

ADDITIONAL NOTICE.

THOMAS GRAY.

Mr. EDWIN CHADWICK, C.B., presented a bust of the late Mr. Thomas Gray, whom he described as a man of one idea, but that idea one of paramount importance, to which the better part of a very useful life had been devoted, with singleness of spirit and without any personal ambition.

Mr. Gray was originally a commercial traveller. Having in the course of his journeys seen a colliery iron tramway, he was impressed with the idea of adapting a modification of the system for the transport of passengers and goods. His opinions were made public in a volume,¹ (preserved in the Library of the Institution,) in which were detailed the disappointments he encountered on all sides—from the apathy of some, the interested views of others, and the general ignorance of the public. Nothing daunted, however, Mr. Gray, in 1820 and 1821, embodied his views in a petition to the Cabinet of the period, explaining the great advantages, and demonstrating the vast social and political importance, of the scheme. His applications even for a trial of the system for superseding stage coaches were useless. Few paid any attention to him; indeed he was regarded as a fanatic, and a visionary, although his views were very modest, as he only anticipated travelling from London to Liverpool or Manchester in twelve hours, and from London to Edinburgh in twenty-four hours. The proposal for carrying goods elicited some slight though languid interest; but it was only when there arose, in the minds of the cotton-brokers of Liverpool and of the manufacturers of Manchester, a sense of grievance at the tolls on the Bridgewater Canal,

¹ “Observations on a General Iron Railway, or Land Steam Conveyance; to supersede the necessity of Horses in all public vehicles: showing its vast superiority in every respect, over all the present pitiful methods of conveyance by turnpike-roads, canals, and coasting-traders. Containing every species of information relative to Railroads and Loco-motive Engines.” By Thomas Gray. Fifth edition. 8vo. Maps and Plates. London: 1825.

that the idea of a Tramway or Railroad in opposition to the Canal was revived, and then chiefly by the statements in Mr. Gray's book. His views had, however, been mainly directed to passenger traffic, whereas their minds were solely fixed on the conveyance of goods, and on the defeat of the canal interests. Mr. Gray was, therefore, not called into council; and he was excluded from participating in the subsequent triumph of the Iron-ways of Great Britain. Although he was, undeniably, one of the earliest pioneers in the greatest works of the age, even his name had scarcely been mentioned in connection with this distinguishing feature of the period.

The bust of Mr. Gray, modelled by a brother of Mr. Chadwick—an amateur artist—was presented to The Institution of Civil Engineers as the fittest place for a record of a man who deserved better of his country.