

Delegates seeks to arrive, through their committee, will probably be wrapt in doubt, in the opinion of the most persevering engineer, till time, the surest test of all the philosophy of man shall have verified it by experience.

The value indeed, of rail roads, no one questions. They have been in use as appurtenances to the collieries of England, for nearly a century and a half; and shortly after the commencement of the present, in the year 1803 an iron rail way was completed within a few miles of London, for the interchange of commodities between its two extremes. As yet however, there is not above ground, in Great Britain, a rail way 40 miles long.

The recent experiment between Liverpool and Manchester is still regarded as an experiment, and to the most sanguine of its friends leaves still in doubt, the relative cost of the construction and repairs of rail roads and canals; and the relative economy which they afford in the transit of commodities.

Since the late efforts on the Forth and Clyde canal, to quicken the velocity of passage boats, by improving their structure, and to supply the power of team to canal navigation, some of the results of which, the committee will perceive in the subjoined correspondence. (See foreign correspondence.)

Even the comparative speed of transportation, by those rival channels of intercourse, may be regarded as questionable; provided the disinterested testimony of the intelligent superintendant of the rail road and canal of the Lehigh coal and navigation company, be entitled to the confidence which that company has deposed in his integrity, skill and ability.

It is admitted that the current of modern British authorities is in favor of rail roads, rather than of canals, though none of them deny or even question the superior efficacy of animal power when exerted on the latter; and most, if not all of them, constitute a comparison between a force employed on rail roads of the best construction, and on canals of less or little more than half the dimensions of that now in progress, along the margin of the Potomac. The comparison instituted by Mr White of Mauch Chunk on the Lehigh is of a canal, nearly as large as this, with a rail way, on which gravitation supplies the moving principle of the laden car. It is, of the results of his long experience, on two works the pro-