GENERAL REMARKS

On the nature and strength of Timber, and other materials.

Having promised, in the table of contents of this small work, some observations on this all-important point, we shall now attend to a brief illustration of the subject, whereby those persons, who have heretofore had nothing to inform their judgment as to science, but the delusive help of untried theory, may be assisted to discover, not only wherein the superior excellence and practicability of the author’s invention is contained, but also the gross ignorance manifested in others who have been hardy enough to assume a capability of judging works of art, though they have not possessed one single prerequisite for the purpose. Hence certain sage persons, who have taught many to believe that Wisdom was to expire with them, have boldly asserted to their credulous admirers, that the strength of materials was not equal for the support of a Bridge to the extent contemplated by the author; whilst at the same time these vain pretenders were totally ignorant of the strength contained in either a cubic inch or foot of Timber, Stone, or any other material.

We shall proceed to shew, in a few instances, what is the different strength of timber, and the positions in which it is produced: first, we shall cite those authors who have written on the subject; whereby the reader may finally discover that all the experiments and theoretical calculations that have heretofore been made, on the nature and strength of timber, are wholly inadequate to determine the subject; as they are not only contradictory, but also principally confined to the illustration of the strength of the side-grain only, on which the author’s invention does not depend.