



Marc Isambard Brunel

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Marc Isambard Brunel (1769-1849) nourished an extraordinary intellect, in spite of a tyrannical father. After serving in Louis XVI's navy as an officer cadet, he left France and, at the age of 30, came to Britain via America; 50 years later he died here. Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) nourished an equally extraordinary intellect. On leaving his native island of Corsica he went to France, where he became First Consul aged 30 and waged war against Britain. He died in St. Helena 22 years later. This revised biography of Marc Brunel reveals, for the first time, how both these temperamentally opposed men labored, unceasingly and with great courage, on behalf of their adopted countries, and how much Marc Brunel contributed to Napoleon's ultimate defeat. Marc Brunel was a man without malice. In addition to being an inventor, artist, and musician, he was the 19th century's most innovative engineer. Until recently, however, he has been acknowledged less for his achievements than for fathering his brilliant and indefatigable son Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-59). Until the age of 56, Marc Brunel was primarily an inventor, but Isambard took his father's and others' inventions when they were barely visible seeds and turned them into highly visible fruits in the shape of steam ships and railways. Marc Brunel worked in a relatively literate age and his frequently forthright comments were eagerly sought by reporters of many newly established daily papers. He never became a "celebrity." This authoritative work must represent the definitive exploration of this remarkable man's life and brings his considerable achievements into focus for the modern historian. Entertaining yet highly informative, and enhanced by a selection of beautifully produced illustrations, it will be widely welcomed.

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