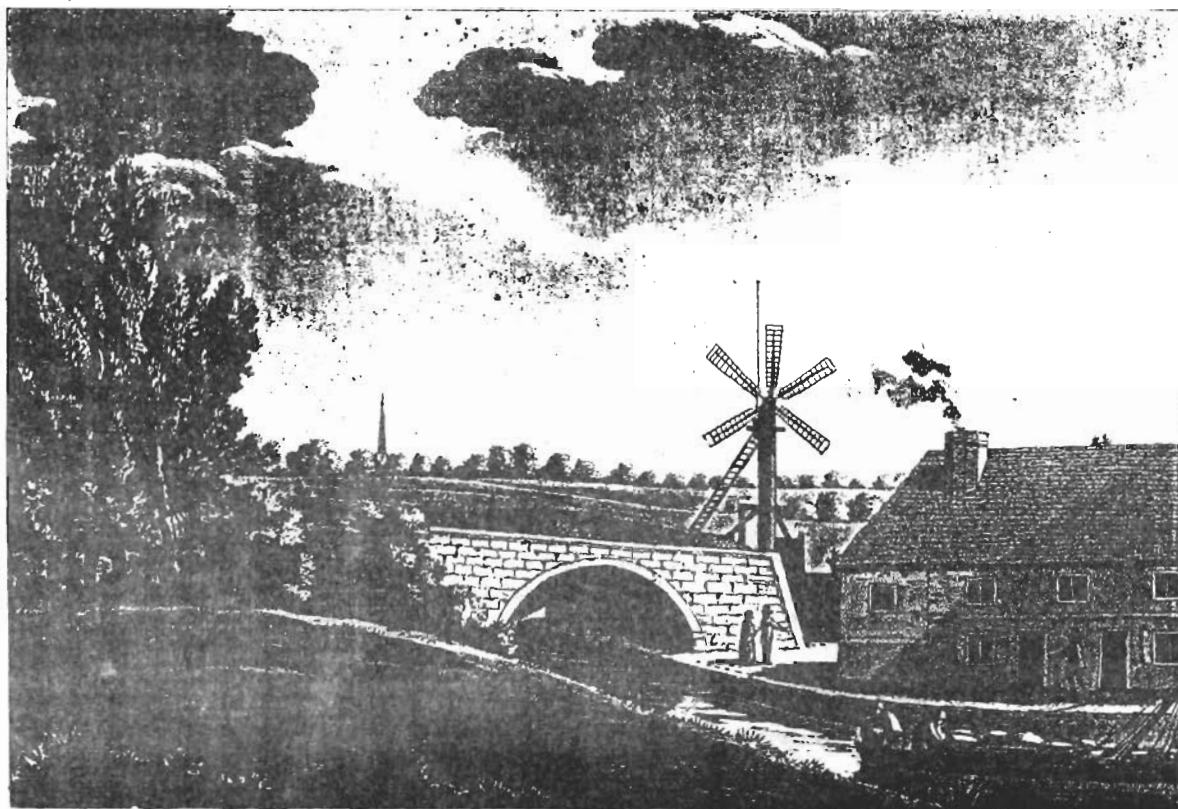


THREE MEN IN A (CANAL) BOAT ...



... From Stonehouse we went to Brimscombe, only a few miles but had eleven locks to surmount... On the following morning we started about eleven, and reached Sapperton about half-past two. We stayed some time there for lunch and rest after the long chain of locks which had brought us through the far-famed Golden Valley ... At four o'clock we entered the Sapperton tunnel, wisely provided with two sticks and a horn lantern. This tunnel is two and a quarter miles long, and nowhere is it wide enough to permit of rowing. Two of us seated on the thwarts as in rowing, pushed the boat along from the sides with the sticks we had obtained at the inn, while the third steered. This mode of progression is easy enough at first; but, during the last half mile, the sticks seemed to grow remarkably heavy. About a mile from the entrance we became aware that we were not the only occupants of the tunnel. Shouts were heard echoing through the vault, and the red light of a barge loomed ahead. On nearing it we shouted, asking if there was room to pass. "What beam?" was the reply. "Four feet eight inches," was our trembling response. "Oh, you can pass anything anywhere." We were reassured. They were two barges being worked through; and, as their beam was only 7ft. lin., we passed them easily, though in the narrowest part. We were told that the tunnel was only 11ft. broad, so we were afraid we should have to return; however, it must have been slightly more ... The country, on leaving the mouth, is unlovely. The first object of interest is the head-water of the Thames, which rises near a bridge trickling out of an old dyke; then another bridge, and then the Cornish beam pumping machine engine, which pumps the water of five springs into the summit level. Our stay that night was at Cirencester, on a branch a good mile long, leaving the canal just above the Siddington locks. The hotel at Cirencester is the King's Arms, by far the best hotel we stayed at, and one of the most moderate ..

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*Thames-head bridge, &c.*