When this amount shall have been expended upon the work, it will be in a condition to carry as large a trade as is likely to pass over it until the opening of the Parkersburg line. The total length of track, besides the main line, between Cumberland and Wheeling is, at this date, 21½ miles, and with the facility for passing trains which is given by the part of this track applicable to that purpose, a large movement can be maintained,—although necessarily the business would be done with increased safety and economy with a greater proportion of double track. When the great accession to be expected from the more direct line to Cincinnati takes place, the track must doubtless be doubled from the junction 74 miles to Piedmont, eastward of which it will already have been furnished with two tracks.

Of the work just enumerated, that under the head of "Bridge Superstructure," and estimated at $5,000, will be completed by the end of the present year, and also the item of $12,000 belonging to the Wheeling inner station. Under the head of "Station Buildings," the 3d item for passenger and freight houses, &c., and amounting to $28,000, is being done (as indispensable to the operations of the road) from month to month as the wants of the road require, and will be completed within the ensuing year.

The work under the divisions of "Graduation," and "Masonry," is not yet commenced, and awaits the instructions of the Board. The Tunnel Masonry particularly ought to be executed with as little delay as possible. The tunnels of the road being, with two or three exceptions, in slate rock, which promised to stand very well when first excavated, but crumbles with time, have required a very expensive system of timber propping, which has already cost upwards of $40,000. The longer it is continued the more it will itself cost, and the more expensive it will make the permanent arching by which it is to be succeeded. As a measure of economy therefore, if not of safety, this work should be begun without loss of time, and the rather as its progress must necessarily be slow. The side walls would be first erected of stone and the timbers then be removed and replaced by the brick arch. The remaining work, making the 2d, 4th and 5th isems under the head of "Station Buildings," should be done in all the coming year,—and the work at Piedmont and the Wheeling outer station should early claim attention.

These important works remain to be completed in order to give the road in a fair degree the character of a finished line; yet, considering the circumstances which attended its first opening, and that but nine months have elapsed since then, we may with truth assert that the road is at least as well advanced towards its real completion as the other great lines of the country were at an equally early period after they were nominally finished. The bed of the road from Cumberland to Wheeling is in good condition, the heavy embankments having become so far consolidated as to be quite safe when properly attended to. The great bugbear of the traveller,

turned from his intention to pass over the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road by the "runner" of some rival route, who has described the terrors of the Cheat river trestle work, in terms such as one of his craft could alone compose, has at length disappeared, and the trains now roll over the broad platform of the great iron viaduct which spans the chasm, as safely and more noislessly than they do over the famous "Cascade Bridge" of the Erie Rail Road. The other viaducts of all classes are of the best construction and in the best condition. The track is in good adjustment, and the trains traverse it with a regularity surpassed upon no other section of this or any other road in the country. Under these circumstances the fears of the public which have been excited by the unscrupulous assertions of the agents of other lines, must soon subside, and this magnificent route over the mountains become as popular a highway for travel as any of its competitors.

Comparison of Estimates and Expenditure.

1. *Comparison with revised Estimates.*—In my last annual report, I presented the several estimates in a series, commencing with the first one submitted in February, 1849, and following with the revisions made from time to time, up to the one offered at the date of that report, October 1st, 1852, and which amounted to $6,875,277

This sum was intended to represent the cost of the road to the time of its being opened for trade and travel to Wheelng, which it was, although in an imperfect manner, on the 1st of January, 1853.

The actual cost however, as appears from the balance sheet (with the above stated addition of balances on accounts not closed at the date to which the books were made up,) is 7,465,385

And the estimate appears to be deficient, $590,108
or 8½ per cent. of its amount.

An analysis of this excess would enable me to account for it satisfactorily—but as this would require a considerable detail of items, and occupy more space perhaps, than should be appropriate to such a discussion, I refrain from it, and proceed to present some facts relating to the estimates and expenditures, which will shew that due care had been taken to reach correct conclusions in regard to the probable cost of the work at the period at which the Board determined to commence its construction, and were influenced in that decision by the report of their engineer.

2. *Comparison with original Estimates.*—In my report upon the cost of the Road in February, 1849, I stated it, upon the route then