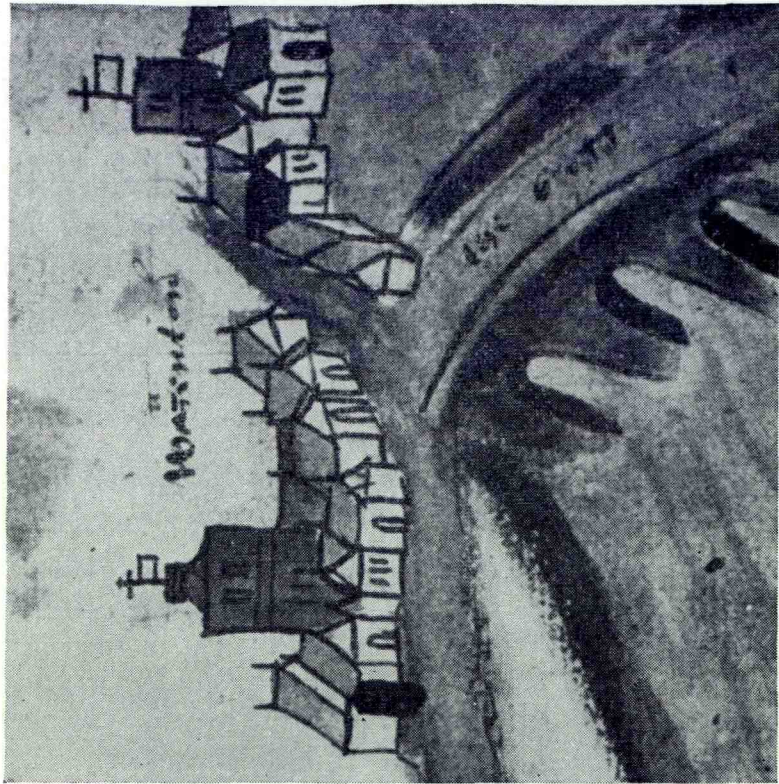


BRIDGING THE MERSEY

The lower Mersey has always placed a difficult barrier between Lancashire and Cheshire. Below the Widnes-Runcorn Gap the width of the river has prohibited bridges, and above the Gap the marshy river-banks have made bridging difficult. From the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century Warrington Bridge was the lowest of the Mersey bridges. Then in 1868 the railway company built the Runcorn Railway, or Aethelflaed, Bridge, and nearly forty years later the Widnes Transporter Bridge was constructed a little to the east. Late in 1960 the last section of the great span of a new high-level road bridge was lowered into position, and at the same time plans for a second road bridge from South Liverpool to Birkenhead were being seriously discussed.

Plate 19.



These two pictures show a contrast in styles. The first is a drawing of the Warrington Bridge which stood from 1495 to 1815. It is taken from a plan of Burtonhead Estate made about 1540, and now in the Lancashire Record Office. The second is a photograph of the three Widnes-Runcorn bridges kindly photographed for the Society by *The Weekly News*, Widnes.

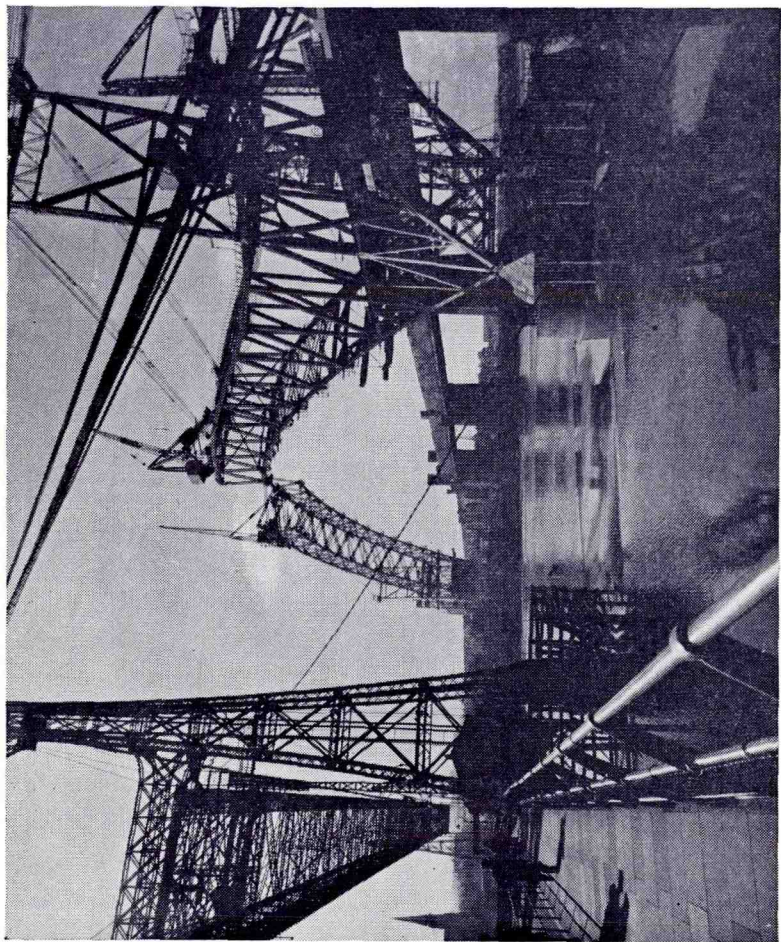


Plate 20.