

VARIOUS

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"Whoever walks through London streets,"
Said Momus to the son of Saturn,
"Each day new edifices meets,
Of queer proportion, queerer pattern:
If thou, O cloud-compelling god,
Wilt aid me with thy special grace,
I, too, will wield my motley hod,
And build a church in Langham-place."

"Agreed," the Thunderer cries; "go plant
Thine edifice, I care not how ill;
Take notice, earth. I hereby grant
Carte blanche of mortar, stone, and trowel.
Go Hermes, Hercules, and Mars,
Fraught with these bills on Henry Hase,
Drop with yon jester from the stars,
And build a church in Langham-place."

Among all our specimens of contemporary church-building, none has excited more animadversion than *All-Souls'*, Langham-place, erected in 1822-1825, from the designs of Mr. Nash. Its general effect is extraordinary and objectionable; but, unfortunately for what merit it really possesses, many of its assailants have so far disregarded the just principles of taste and criticism, as to go laboriously out of their way to be profanely witty on its defects. Song and satire, raillery and ridicule, pun and pasquinade, and even the coarseness of caricature, have thus been let off at this specimen of NASH-ional architecture; whilst their authors have wittingly kept out any redeeming graces which could be found in its architectural details.

The principal features of the exterior were suggested by its situation, it being placed on an angular plot of ground, between Langham-place and Regent-street. To afford an advantageous view from either point, the tower, which is circular, is nearly detached from the body of the church, and is surrounded by columns of the modern Ionic order, supporting an entablature, crowned by a balustrade, which is continued along the sides of the church. Above the portico is a Corinthian peristyle, the base of which is also that of a fluted cone, which forms the spire, and is terminated in an acute point. The steeple is complete in itself, and adapted to its situation, having the same appearance which ever way it is viewed. This portion of the edifice has,

however, been more stigmatized than any other, although it has been pronounced by persons of taste and accredited judgment to be the best steeple recently erected. To our eye, the church itself, *apart* from the tower, (for such it almost is) is perhaps, one of the most miserable structures in the metropolis,—in its starved proportions more resembling a manufactory, or warehouse, than the impressive character of a church exterior; an effect to which the Londoner is not an entire stranger. Here, too, we are inclined to ascribe much of the ridicule, which the whole church has received, to its puny proportions and scantiness of decoration, which are far from being assisted by any stupendousness in their details, the first impression of which might probably have fixed the attention of the spectator. Indeed, the whole style of the tower and steeple appears peculiarly illadapted for so small a scale as has here been attempted.

As we love "a jest's prosperity," we recommend such of our readers as are partial to innocent pasquinade, to turn to the "Lyric," in a recent volume of the *New Monthly Magazine*, commencing as above. It is too long for entire insertion here, but its raciness will doubtless gratify those who may be induced to refer to it.

TREMENDOUS RAINS

(For the Mirror.)

Like a low-hung cloud, *it rains so fast,*
That all at once it falls.—DRYDEN.

There are two English proverbs relative to rain; the first is, "*It rains by Planets.*" "This the country people (says Ray) use when it rains in one place and not in another; meaning that the showers are governed by planets, which being erratic in their own motions, cause such uncertain wandering of clouds and falls of rain. Or it rains by planets—that is, the falls of showers are as uncertain, as the motions of the planets are imagined to be." The second—"It never rains but it pours:" which appears to be the case at present. In the year 553 it rained violently in Scotland for five months; in 918 there was a continual rain in that country for five months; a violent one in London 1222; again 1233, so violent that the harvest did not begin till Michaelmas; 1338, from Midsummer to Christmas, so that there was not one day or night dry together; in Wales, which destroyed 10,000 sheep, September 19th 1752; in Languedoc, which destroyed the village of Bar le Due, April 26th, 1776; and in the Island of Cuba, on the

21st of June, 1791, 3,000 persons and 11,700 cattle of various kinds perished by the torrents occasioned by the rains.

P. T. W.

CURIOUS SCRAPS

(For the Mirror.)

The first dissection on record, is one in which Democritus of Abdera, was engaged, in order to ascertain the sources and course of the bile.—It was the custom among the Egyptians, to carry about at their feasts a skeleton, lest their guests, in the midst of feasting and merriment, should forget the frail tenure of life and its enjoyments.

The most ancient eclipse upon record, was observed by the Chaldeans 721 years before the Christian era, and recorded by Ptolemy. The observation was made at Babylon the 19th of March.—In ancient days, for want of parchment to draw deeds upon, great estates were frequently conveyed from one family to another only by the ceremony of a turf and a stone, delivered before witnesses, and without any written agreement.—It is singular, that by the Domesday Book, as quoted by Camden, there appears to have been in Lincoln, when that survey was taken, no less than 1070 "inns for entertainment."—Henry I., about the year 1125, caused to be made a standard yard, from the length of his own arm, in order to prevent frauds in the measurement of cloth. This standard is supposed to have been

deposited, with other measures, &c. in Winchester; he likewise (it is said) ordered halfpence and farthings to be made round, which before his time were square.—The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were first called "studia," or "studies."—Edward the Confessor received yearly, from the manor of Barton, near Gloucester, 3,000 loaves of bread for the maintenance of his dogs—In the reign of Edward III., only three taverns might sell sweet wines in London; one in Cheape, one in Wallbrook, and the other in Lombard Street.—Lord Lyttleton, in his *Life of Henry II.*, vol. i. p. 50, says, "Most of our ancient historians give him the character of a very religious prince, but his religion was, after the fashion of those times, belief without examination, and devotion without piety. It was a religion that at the same time allowed him to pillage kingdoms, that threw him on his knees before a relic or a cross, but suffered him unrestrained to trample upon the liberties and rights of mankind;" again, "his government was harsh and despotic, violating even the principles of that institution which he himself had established. Yet so far he performed the duty of a sovereign that he took care to maintain a good police in his realm; which, in the tumultuous state of his government, was a great and difficult work." How well he performed it, we may learn even from the testimony of a contemporary Saxon historian, who says, "during his reign a man might have travelled in perfect security all over the kingdom, with his bosom full of gold; nor durst any kill another in revenge of the greatest offences, nor offer violence to the chastity of a

woman. But it was a poor compensation that the highways were safe, when the courts of justice were dens of thieves, and when almost every man in authority, or in office, used his power to oppress and pillage the people."—Towards the close of the life of Henry IV., he kept the regal diadem always in his sight by day, and at night it shared his pillow. Once the Prince of Wales, whom Henry always suspected more than he loved, seeing his father in a most violent paroxysm of disease, removed the crown from his bed. The king on his recovery missed it, sent for his son, and taxed him with his impatience and want of duty, but the prince defended his conduct with such rational modesty, that Henry, convinced of his innocence, embraced and blessed him. "Alas!" said Henry to his son, "you know too well how I gained this crown. How will you defend this ill-gotten possession?" "With my sword," said the prince, "as my father has done."

Henry V. was, perhaps, the first English monarch who had ships of his own. Two of these, which sailed against Harfleur, were called "The King's Chamber," and "The King's Hall." They had purple sails, and were large and beautiful.

Party rage ran so high in 1403, that an act of parliament was found necessary to declare, "Pulling out of eyes and cutting out of tongues to be felony."—Dr. Rush, of Philadelphia, in his "Inquiry into the effects of spirituous liquors on the human body, and their influence on the happiness of society;" says, "Among the inhabitants of cities, spirits produce debts, disgrace, and bankruptcy. Among farmers, they produce idleness with

its usual consequence, such as houses without windows, barns without roofs, gardens without enclosures, fields without fences, hogs without yokes, sheep without wool, meagre cattle, feeble horses, and half clad, dirty children, without principles, morals, or manners."

P. T. W.

Shower of Sugar Plums—Charles XI., attended by his court, had been hunting in the neighbourhood of Carcassone. After the stag had been taken, a gentleman of the neighbourhood invited the king to a splendid dinner which he had prepared for him. At the conclusion of the banquet the ceiling of the hall *suddenly opened*, a thick cloud, descended and burst over their heads like a thunder storm, pouring forth a shower of *sugar-plums* instead of hail, which was succeeded by a gentle rain of rose-water.

The Coin Guinea—In the reign of king Charles II., when Sir Robert Holmes, of the Isle of Wight, brought gold-dust from the coast of Guinea, a guinea first received its name from that country.

A Motto.—A constant frequenter of city feasts, having grown enormously fat, it was proposed to write on his back, "*Widened at the expense of the corporation of London.*"

Sedan-chairs and Hackney-coaches.—Sir S. Duncombe, predecessor to Duncombe Lord Feversham, and gentleman pensioner to King James and Charles I., introduced sedan-chairs into this country, anno 1634, when he procured a patent that

vested in him and his heirs the sole right of carrying persons up and down in them for a certain sum. Sir Saunders had been a great traveller, and saw these chairs at Sedan, where they were first invented. It is remarkable that Capt. Bailey introduced the use of hackney-coaches in this year; a tolerable ride might then be obtained, in either of these vehicles for four pence.

Heroism—*Seward*, "the brave Earl of Northumberland," feeling in his sickness that he drew near his end, quitted his bed and put on his armour, saying, "That it became not a man to die like a beast," on which he died standing; an act as singular as it was heroic.

Epigram on Epigrams.

What is an epigram? a dwarfish whole,
Its body brevity, and wit its soul.

W. H. H.

"THE MOUSE TOWER," A *GERMAN LEGEND*

(For the Mirror.)

The bishop of Mentz was a wealthy prince,
Wealthy and proud was he;
He had all that was worth a wish on earth—
But he had not charitie!

He would stretch put his *empty* hands to *bless*,
Or lift them both to *pray*;
But alack! to lighten man's distress,
They moved no other way.

A famine came! but his heart was still
As hard as his pride was high;
And the starving poor but throng'd his door
To curse him and to die.

At length from the crowd rose a clamour so loud,
That a cruel plot laid he;
He open'd one of his granaries wide,
And bade them enter free.

In they rush'd—the maid and the sire.
And the child that could barely run—
Then he clos'd the barn, and set it on fire.
And burnt them every one!

And loud he laugh'd at each terrible shriek,
And cried to his archer-train,
"The merry mice!—how shrill they squeak!—
They are fond of the bishop's grain!"

But mark, what an awful judgment soon,
On the cruel bishop fell;
With so many mice his palace swarm'd,
That in it he could not dwell.

They gnaw'd the arras above and beneath,
They eat each savoury dish up;
And shortly their sacrilegious teeth
Began to nibble the bishop!

He flew to his castle of Ehrenfels,
By the side of the Rhine so fair;
But they found the road to his new abode,
And came in legions there.

He built him, in haste, a tower tall
In the tide, for his better assurance;
But they swam the river, and scal'd the wall,

And worried him past endurance.

One morning his skeleton there was seen,
By a load of flesh the lighter;
They had picked his bones uncommonly clean,
And eaten his very mitre!

Such was the end of the bishop of Mentz,
And oft at the midnight hour,
He comes in the shape of a fog so dense,
And sits on his old "Mouse-Tower."

C.K. W.

PRUSSIC ACID

(For the Mirror.)

The circumstance of Montgomery's recent suicide in Newgate, has led me to send you the following remarks upon the nature and properties of that most violent poison, Prussic acid, with which the unfortunate man terminated his existence.

Were we to consider the constituent parts and properties of the most common things we are in the habit of daily using, and their poisonous and destructive natures, we should recoil at the deadly potion, and shrink from the loathsome draught we are about to take. That which we consider the most delicious and exhilarating portion of our common beverage, porter, contains carbonic acid gas, commonly known by the "spirit," and which the poor miners dread with the utmost horror, like the Arabian does the destructive blast of the simoon. Oxalic acid, so much the fear of those accustomed to the medicine—Epsom salts, is made from that useful article, *sugar*, by uniting with it a smaller portion, more than it has naturally, of oxygen gas. The air we breathe contains a most deadly poison, called by chemists azotic gas, which, by its being mixed with what is called vital air, (oxygen gas,) becomes necessary to our existence, as

much as the one (vital air or oxygen gas) would be prejudicial without the other; and *Prussic acid*, the most violent of all poisons, is contained in the common bitter-almond. But these most destructive substances are always found combined with others, which render them often perfectly harmless, and can be separated only by the skill of the chemist.

The Prussic acid (by some called hydrocyanic acid) is a liquid, extracted from vegetables, and contains one part of cyanogen and one part of hydrogen. It is extracted from the bitter-almond, (as has been stated,) peach-blossom, and the leaves of the laurocerasus. It may also be obtained from animal substances, although a vegetable acid. If lime be added to water, distilled from these substances, a Prussiate of lime is formed; when, if an acid solution of iron be added to this mixture, common Prussian blue (or Prussiate of iron) is precipitated. The acid may be obtained from Prussiate of potash, by making a strong solution of this salt, and then adding as much tartaric acid as will precipitate the potash, when the acid will be left in solution, which must be decanted and distilled.

Its properties are a pungent odour, very much resembling that of bitter-almonds, with a hot but sweetish taste, and extremely volatile. It contains azote, with which no other vegetable acid is combined; it is largely used in the manufacture of Prussian blue. It is the most violent of all poisons, and destroys animals by being applied to the skin only. It is stated by an able chemist, that a single drop applied to the tongue of a mastiff dog caused

death so instantaneously, that it appeared to have been destroyed by lightning. One drop to the human frame destroys life in two minutes.

But when chemically combined with other substances, its power is in a great measure neutralized, and it becomes a valuable article, both to the chemist as a test, and to the physician as a medicine. The Prussiate of potash and iron will enable the chemist to discover nearly the whole of the metals when in solution, by the colours its combination produces. Dr. Zollekoffer says, that in intermittent fevers the Prussiate of iron is in its effects superior to Cinchona bark, and says it never disagrees with the stomach, or creates nausea even in the most irritable state, while bark is not unfrequently rejected; a patient will recover from the influence of intermitting and remitting fevers, in the generality of cases, in much less time than is usual in those cases in which bark is employed. S.S.T.

THE ANECDOTE GALLERY.

VOLTAIRE

(Continued from page 64.)

A certain Hungarian traveller, a man of consequence in his country, but not particularly wise, had fruitlessly tried to be introduced, without finding any one at Geneva, willing to undertake the task, as they were all afraid Voltaire would be rude to him. A young man, who heard of this, engaged to procure the stranger an interview with Voltaire; and on the day appointed, contrived to have him conveyed out of town to a good-looking residence, where well-dressed servants received him at the door, and ushered him up stairs in due form. Here then at last he found himself, as he thought, *tête-à-tête* with Voltaire. The *malade de Ferney*, personated by our young friend, was lying down on a sofa, wrapped up in a damask robe-de-chambre, a night-cap of black velvet, with gold lace, on his head, or rather on the top of an immense periwig, *a la Louis XIV*

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