VARIOUS

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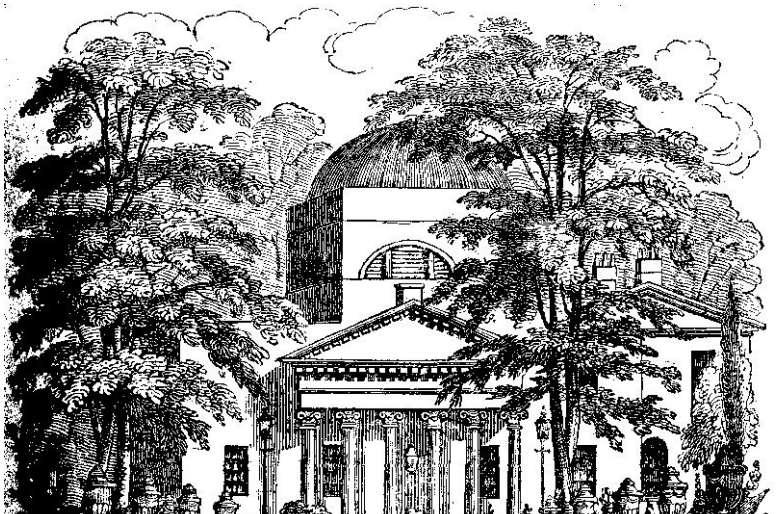
DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE'S VILLA, CHISWICK



The lamented death of the Right Hon. George Canning has naturally excited the curiosity of our readers to the villa in which that eminent statesman breathed his last; and we have therefore obtained from our artist an original drawing, which has been taken since the melancholy event occurred, and from which we are now enabled to give the above correct and picturesque engraving.

Chiswick House is the seat of the Duke of Devonshire, built by the last Earl of Burlington, whose taste and skill as an architect have been frequently recorded. The ascent to the house is by a noble double flight of steps, on one side of which is a statue of Palladio, and on the other that of Inigo Jones. The portico is supported by six fluter Corinthian pillars, with a pediment; and a dome at the top enlightens a beautiful octagonal saloon. "This house," says Mr. Walpole, "the idea of which is borrowed from a wellknown villa of Palladio, and is a model of taste, though not without faults, some of which are occasioned by too strict adherence to rules and symmetry. Such are too many corresponding doors in spaces so contracted; chimneys between windows, and, which is worse, windows between chimneys; and vestibules however beautiful, yet little secured from the damps of this climate. The trusses that support the ceiling of the corner drawing-room are beyond measure massive, and the ground apartment is rather a diminutive catacomb than a library in a northern latitude. Yet these blemishes, and Lord Hervey's wit,

who said 'the house was too small to inhabit, and too large to hang to one's watch,' cannot depreciate the taste that reigns throughout the whole. The larger court, dignified by picturesque cedars, and the classic scenery of the small court, that unites the old and new house, are more worth seeing than many fragments of ancient grandeur which our travellers visit under all the dangers attendant on long voyages. The garden is in the Italian taste, but divested of conceits, and far preferable to every style that reigned till our late improvements. The buildings are heavy, and not equal to the purity of the house. The lavish quantity of urns and sculpture behind the garden front should be retrenched." Such were the sentiments of Mr. Walpole on this celebrated villa, before the noble proprietor began the capital improvements which have since been completed. Two wings have been added to the house, from the designs of Mr. Wyattville. These remove the objections that have been made to the house, are more fanciful and beautiful than convenient and habitable; the gardens have also been considerably improved, and now display all the beauties of modern planting.

It is a remarkable coincidence that at this secluded and beautiful villa Charles James Fox terminated his glorious career, in the same month, and having arrived at the same age (fifty-seven) as Mr. Canning.

As many of our readers may be induced to visit this quiet and picturesque spot, we would recommend them to pass down the private carriage-way which leads from Turnham-green to the

porter's lodge, and having reached the door that opens to a rural lane which runs in front of the villa, to turn into the field, the gate of which is situated near a small bridge, and from thence a delightful view may be obtained of this celebrated villa. It was on this spot the above view was sketched. In returning through the lane which we have just alluded to, the first turning on the right conducts to the church, which interestingly-ancient edifice demands a remark in this place.

Chiswick church is situated near the water side. The present structure originally consisted only of a nave and chancel, and was built about the beginning of the fifteenth century, at which time the tower was erected at the charge of William Bordal, vicar of Chiswick, who died in 1435. It is built of stone and flint, as is the north wall of the church and chancel; the latter has been repaired with brick: a transverse aisle, at the east end of the nave, was added on the south side in the middle of the last, and a corresponding aisle on the south side, towards the beginning of the last century. The former was enlarged in the year 1772, by subscription, and carried on to the west end of the nave: both the aisles are of brick.

In the churchyard is a monument to the memory of William Hogarth. On this monument, which is ornamented with a mask, a laurel wreath, a palette, pencils, and a book, inscribed, "Analysis of Beauty," are the following lines, by his friend and contemporary, the late David Garrick:—

"Farewell, great painter of mankind,
Who reached the noblest point of art,
Whose pictur'd morals charm the mind,
And through the eye correct the heart!
If genius fire thee, reader, stay;
If nature move thee, drop a tear;
If neither touch thee, turn away,
For Hogarth's honour'd dust lies here."

Near this is the tomb of Dr. Rose, many years distinguished as a critic in a respectable periodical publication.

In the church, in the Earl of Burlington's vault, is interred the celebrated Kent, a painter, architect, and father of modern gardening. "In the first character," says Mr. Walpole, "he was below mediocrity; in the second, he was the restorer of the science; in the last, an original, and the inventor of an art that realizes painting and improves nature. Mahomet imagined an Elysium, but Kent created many." He frequently declared, it is said, that he caught his taste in gardening from reading the picturesque descriptions of Spencer. Mason, noticing his mediocrity as a painter, pays this fine tribute to his excellence in the decoration of rural scenery:—

——"He felt
The pencil's power—but fir'd by higher forms
Of beauty than that pencil knew to paint,
Work'd with the living hues that Nature lent,
And realiz'd his landscapes. Generous be,

Who gave to Painting what the wayward nymph
Refus'd her votary; those Elysian scenes,
Which would she emulate, her nicest hand
Must all its force of light and shade employ."

On the outside of the wall of the churchyard, on a stone tablet, is the following curious inscription:—"This wall was made at ye charges of ye right honourable and trulie pious Lorde Francis Russel, Duke of Bedford, out of true zeal and care for ye keeping of this churchyard, and ye wardrobe of God's saints, whose bodies lay therein buried, from violating by swine and other profanation, so witnessed! William Walker, V., A.D. 1623."

We cannot better conclude our description than with a sketch from Sir Richard Phillips's "Morning's Walk to Kew." He was walking on the opposite banks of the river, when on a sudden he caught the sound of a ring of village bells. "Surely," he exclaimed, "they are Chiswick bells!—the very bells under the sound of which I received part of my early education, and, as a schoolboy, passed the happiest days of my life!—Well might their tones vibrate to my inmost soul, and kindle uncommon sympathies!" I now recollected that the winding of the river must have brought me nearer to that simple and primitive village than the profusion of wood had permitted me to perceive, and my memory had been unconsciously acted upon by the tones which served as keys to all the associations connected with these bells, their church and the village of Chiswick! I listened again, and now discriminated those identical sounds which I had not heard

during a period of more than thirty years. I distinguished the very words in the successive tones, which the school-boys and puerile imaginations at Chiswick used to combine with them. In thought, I became again a schoolboy—"Yes," said I, "the six bells tell me that *my dun cow has just calv'd*, exactly as they did above thirty years since!"—Did the reader never encounter a similar key-note, leading to a multitude of early and vivid recollections? Those well-remembered tones, in like manner, brought before my imagination numberless incidents and personages no longer important, or no longer in existence. My scattered and once-loved schoolmates, their characters and their various fortunes, passed in rapid review before me; my schoolmaster, his wife, and all the gentry, and heads of families, whose orderly attendance at divine service on Sundays, while those well-remembered bells were "chiming for church," (but now gone and mouldering in the adjoining graves,) were again presented to my perceptions! With what pomp and form they used to enter and depart from their house of God! I still saw with the mind's eye the widow Hogarth, and her maiden relative, Richardson, walking up the aisle dressed in their silken sacks, their raised head-dresses, their black hoods, their lace ruffles, and their high-crook'd canes, preceded by their aged servant, Samuel; who, after he had wheeled his mistress to church in her Bath-chair, carried the prayer-books up the aisle, and opened and shut the pew! There too was the portly Dr. Griffiths, of the *Monthly Review*, with his literary wife in her neat and elevated wire-winged cap! And oftimes the vivacious

and angelic Duchess of Devonshire, whose bloom had not then suffered from the canker-worm of pecuniary distress, created by the luxury of charity! Nor could I forget the humble distinction of the aged sexton, Mortefee, whose skill in psalmody enabled him to lead that wretched group of singers, whom Hogarth so happily portrayed; whose performance with the pitch-fork excited so much wonder in little boys; and whose gesticulations and contortions of head, hand, and body, in beating time, were not outdone even by Joah Bates in the commemorations of Handel! Yes, simple and happy villagers! I remember scores of you;—how fortunately ye had, and still have, escaped the contagion of the metropolitan vices, though distant but five miles; and how many of you have I conversed with, who, at an adult age, had never beheld the degrading assemblage of its knaveries and miseries!

I revelled in the melancholy pleasure of these recollections, yielding my whole soul to that witchery of sensibility which magnifies the perception of being, till one of the bells was overset, when, the peal stopping, I had leisure to think on the rapid advance of the day, and on the consequent necessity of quickening my speed.

THE SKETCH-BOOK

NO. XLIV

THE BLUE BOTTLE

"A *fly* your honour."—*Brighton Cliff*

Talk of musquitoes!—a musquito is a gentleman who honourably runs you through with a small sword, and from whom (as from a mad dog) we may easily seek a defence in—*muslin*.

But your rory-tory, hurly-burly blue-bottle, is no better than a bully. His head is a *humming-top*, and his tight blue little body like a tomahawk, cased in glittering steel, which he takes a delight in whirling against your head. I really believe, that to confine a nervous man in a room with one of these winged tormentors, on a July day, would inevitably destroy him in less than an hour.

He rudely and unceremoniously bumps away all sober reflection,—(I wonder whether the phrenological Spurzheim ever felt the *bumps* of a blue-bottle!) then his whimsical vagaries effectually defy repose; now settling with his tickling bandy legs upon your nose, and industriously insinuating his sharp proboscis, and anon abruptly buzzing in your ear—no secret—

off he shoots again to his own music.

Now, truly, his *hum-drum* puts me in mind of the whirring tone of the hurdy-gurdy, while his *ad libitum* bumping against the booming window-panes sounds, to my fancy, like the unskilful accompaniment of a double drum, beaten by some unmusical urchin.

The house spider who spreads with so much care his beautiful nets for gnats, and moths, and smaller flies, finds alike his labour and his toils in vain to secure this rampaging rogue; and, indeed, when the turbulent blue-bottle chances, in his bouncing random flight, to get entangled in the glutinous meshes, he shakes and roars, and blusters so loudly, until he breaks away, that the spider affrighted, invariably takes advantage of his long legs to scamper off to his sanctum in the cracked wainscot—like some imbecile watchman, who fearing to encounter a tall inebriated bruiser, sneaks away with admirable discretion to the security of his snug box, praying the drunkard may speedily reel into another *beat*.

Your noisy people generally grow taciturn in their cups—but Sir Blue-bottle, though he drinks deep draughts of your wine, particularly if it abound in sweetness, is never changed. He is naturally giddy, and according to entomologists, always sees more than double, while his head was never made to be turned. So may you hope for peace—only in his flight or death! —*Absurdities: in Prose and Verse*.

LAW AND LAWYERS

(For the Mirror.)

William the Conqueror entertained the difficult project of totally abolishing the English language, and for that purpose, he ordered that in all schools throughout the kingdom, the youth should be instructed in the French tongue. Until the reign of Edward III. the pleadings in the supreme courts of judicature were performed in French, when it was appointed that the pleas should be pleaded in English; but that they should be entered or recorded in Latin. The deeds were drawn in the same language; the laws were composed in that idiom, and no other tongue was used at court. It became, says Hume, the language of all fashionable company; and the English themselves ashamed of their own country, affected to excel in that foreign dialect. At Athens, and even in France and England, formal and prepared pleadings were prohibited, and it was unlawful to amuse the court with long, artful harangues; only it was the settled custom here, in important matters, to begin the pleadings with a text out of the holy scriptures. It is of late years that eloquence was admitted to the bar.

The account which the learned judge Hale gives of the

lawyers, who pleaded in the 15th century, does them little honour. He condemns the reports during the reigns of Henry IV. and V. as inferior to those of the last twelve years of Edward III. and he speaks but coolly of those which the reign of Henry VI. produces. Yet this deficiency of progressive improvement in the common law arose not from a want of application to the science; since we learn from Fortescue that there were no fewer than two thousand students attending on the inns of chancery and of court, in the time of its writer. Gray's-inn, in the time of Henry VIII. was so incommodious, that "the ancients of this house were necessitated to lodge double." Indeed until the beginning of the last century the lawyers lived mostly in their inns of court, or about Westminster-hall. But a great change has been effected; they are all now removed to higher ground, squares and genteel neighbourhoods, no matter how far distant from their chambers.

The number of judges in the courts of Westminster was by no means certain. Under Henry VI. there were at one time eight judges in the court of common pleas. Each judge took a solemn oath that "he would take no fee, pension, gift, reward, or bribe, from any suitor, saving meat and drink, which should be of no great value." In 1402, the salary of the chief justice of the king's bench was forty pounds per annum. In 1408, the chief justice of the common pleas had fifty-five marks per annum. In 1549, the chief justice of the king's bench had an addition of thirty pounds to his salary, and each justice of the same bench and common pleas, twenty pounds. At this time, a felony under the value of

twelve pence, was not a capital offence; and twelve pence then was equal to sixty shillings at the present day.

To Richard III. on whom history has cast innumerable stains, England has considerable obligations as a legislator. Barrington thus speaks of him: "Not to mention his causing each act of parliament to be written in English and to be printed, he was the first prince on the English throne who enabled the justices of the peace to take bail; and he caused to be enacted a law against raising money by 'benevolence' which when pleaded by the citizens of London against Cardinal Wolsey, could only be answered by an averment, that Richard being a usurper and a murderer of his nephews, the laws of so wicked a man ought not to be forced." And a noble biographer, (Bacon's Henry VII.) says, "He was a good lawgiver for the ease and solace of the common people." Cardinal Wolsey to terrify the citizens of London into the general loan exacted in 1525, told them plainly, *that it were better that some should suffer indigence than that the king at this time should lack, and therefore beware and resist not, nor ruffle not in the case, for it may fortune to cost some people their heads.* And says Hume, when Henry VIII. heard that the commons made a great difficulty of granting the required supply, he was so provoked that he sent for Edward Montague, one of the members who had a considerable influence on the house; and he being introduced to his majesty, had the mortification to hear him speak in these words: *Ho! man! will they not suffer my bill to pass?* And laying his hand on Montague's head, who was

then on his knees before him, *get my bill passed by to-morrow, or else to-morrow this head of yours shall be off*. This cavalier manner of Henry's succeeded; for next day the bill passed. Another instance of arbitrary power is worth relating. In Strype's life of Stow we find, a garden house belonging to an honest citizen of London, (which chanced to obstruct the improvement of a powerful favourite. Thomas Cromwell,) "loosed from the foundation, borne on rollers, and replaced two and twenty feet within the garden," without the owner's leave being required; nay without his knowledge. The persons employed, being asked their authority for this extraordinary proceeding, made only this reply, "That Sir Thomas Cromwell had commanded them to do it," *and none durst argue the matter*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.