VARIOUS

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The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction / Volume 12, No. 329, August 30, 1828:

Содержание

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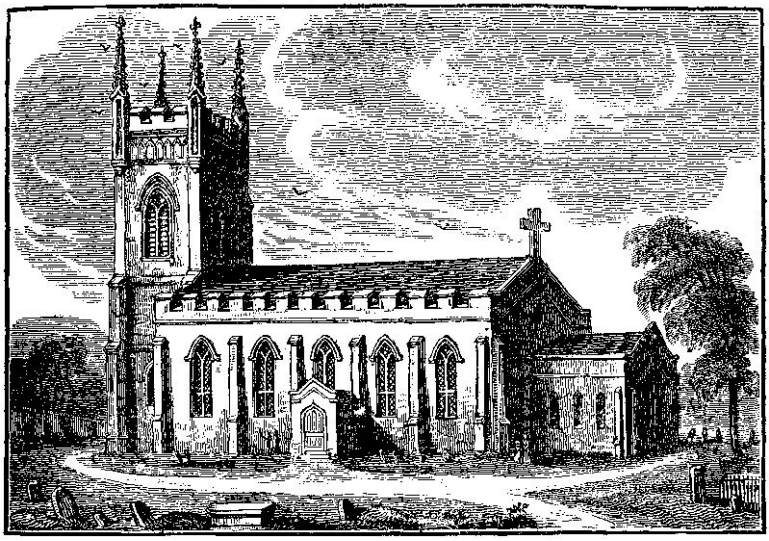
NEW CHURCH, BUILDING AT STAINES



Who has journeyed on the Exeter road without noticing the town of STAINES, with its host of antiquarian associations —as the *Stana* (Saxon) or London Stone,[1] its ancient bridge, for the repair of which three oaks out of Windsor Forest were granted by the crown in the year 1262, besides *pontage* or temporary tolls previous to the year 1600.—Dr. Stukeley's conjectures respecting the *Via Trinobantica* passing here—and the *old* parish church, the situation of which appeared to denote

[1] This is a boundary stone which marks the extent of the jurisdiction possessed by the City of London over the western part of the River Thames. It stands on the margin of the river, in the vicinity of Staines church, and bears the date of 1280. On a moulding round the upper part is inscribed "GOD preserve the City of London, A.D. 1280."

the site of the more ancient town of Staines. It is here too, that the tourist begins to imagine himself *in rure*, after he has been whirled through the brick and mortar avenues of *Kensington*, and *Hammersmith*, and the unsightly lane-street of *Brentford*,[2] with all its cockney reminiscences of equestrianism and election squabbles; *Hounslow* and its by-gone days of highway notoriety and powder-mill and posting celebrity, and *Bedfont*, with its yew trees tortured into peacock shapes, and the date 1704. Then, who does not recollect and venerate the convivial celebrity of this route, its luxurious inns, and their "thrones of human felicity;" along which Quin, Dr. Johnson or Shenstone could scarcely have accomplished a stage a day!

In our days, hundreds of London tourists breakfast at the *Bush*, although, after sixteen miles' ride, their appetites do not require this stimulant any more than do the glories of the *Bush* cellars after dinner.

But we must pass on to the church. The *old* building was in the Gothic or pointed style, with lancet windows, &c., but much disfigured by churchwardens' repairs, although the great Inigo Jones is said to have built its square, brick tower. At length, a considerable portion of this ancient structure fell in one Sunday morning, during the service, but, as the newspapers say, "fortunately no lives were lost." The inhabitants then resolved to rebuild nearly the whole, and the design of Mr. J.B. Watson was

[2] George II. used to say when riding through Brentford, with his heavy guards, "I do like dis place, 'tis so like Yarmany."

adopted. The foundation stone was laid March 31, in the present year, and the building is to be completed by Christmas next. The church is intended to contain 1,100 persons. The length of the interior, 65 feet; width, 47 feet; height to ceiling, 25 feet. The chancel is to be rebuilt at the expense of the impropriators. The lower part of Inigo Jones's tower is to remain, and the whole is to be raised 23 feet. These repairs, with the enclosure of the churchyard, will not exceed 4,000*l*.; and the progress of the undertaking is highly creditable to the taste and execution of all the parties concerned.

As one act of public spirit generally leads to another, the erection of a new stone bridge is projected at Staines; it is to be nearer the church than the present bridge, and will afford a better view of the new structure. An elegant stone bridge was erected here in 1796, but two of the piers sinking, the bridge was taken down, and an iron one substituted; this failed, and has since been supported by wooden piles and frame-work.

THE SPECTRE'S VOYAGE

(For the Mirror.)

"There is a part of the river Wye, between the city of Hereford and the town of Moss, which was distinguished and well known for upwards of two centuries, by the appellation of the Spectre's Voyage; across which, so long as it retained that name, neither entreaty nor remuneration could induce any boatman to convey passengers after a certain hour of the night. The superstitious ideas current amongst the lower orders of people were, that on every evening about the hour of eight, a beautiful female figure was seen in a small vessel, sailing from Hereford to Northrigg, (a small village about three miles distant,) with the utmost rapidity, against wind and tide, or even in a dead calm—landed at the little village, returned, and vanished, when arrived at a certain part of the river, where the current is remarkably strong, about half a mile from the city of Hereford."

–*Neele's Romance of History.* See MIRROR, vol. x, page 352.

Bright shines the silver queen of night,
Upon fair Wye's soft stream;
Which throws a ray of heavenly light
Reflected from her beam.

Yet this smooth water, wide and clear,
This scene of sweet repose;
Erst filled the villagers with fear
As ancient story goes.

'Tis told us that in dead of night,
(In days of yore long past)
A skiff was seen compact and light,
With sail, and oars, and mast.
And in it sat the spectral form,
Of a most beauteous maid;
Who heeded neither wind nor storm,
As she this voyage made.

Nor heeded she the pelting rain,
Nor winter's blinding snows;
But to the destin'd spot amain,
The scudding vessel goes;
Or if so calm, the placid Wye,
No wave was on its face,
Yet onward did that light bark fly
To reach the fated place.

When on the deck she was espied,
Each trembled to behold;
As on she sail'd 'gainst wind and tide,
('Tis scarce believ'd when told)
Then sail and oar were both applied,
And swift the vessel flew;

But where the man—who could abide
That vessel to pursue?

Ah! who could dare approach the spot
Where Isabel did steer?
That mariner existeth not,
But did that phantom fear.
Or where's the man whose courage bold,
Could lend him strength one hour,
To gaze upon that form so cold,
Or place him in her power.

And when the spectral sail was spread,
That flutter'd to and fro;
The hair would bristle on each head,
Which awful fear did show.
And when the moon-beam seem'd to kiss,
That dreaded maiden's brow;
Something each knew would go amiss,
Nor judg'd such wrong, I trow.

For tho' the form was wond'rous fair,
'Twas terrible to view;
And to avoid it was the care
Of every vessel's crew.
Full many a dismal tale was told,
Of that fam'd spectre ship;
And none were ever known so bold
To watch this nightly trip.

Why did that troubled shade proceed
Along that watery way?
Or what the purpose, or the deed,
Which caus'd her thus to stray?
For good, or bad, did Isabel,
Forsake her dreary grave?
Or was't because she lov'd to sail
On Wye's pellucid wave?

The spectre came to meet her dear,
Lord Hugh—the young and brave;
When dreadful tidings met her ear,
"He'd found a traitor's grave."
When second Edward rul'd this land,
(A wretched prince was he,)
Of favourites he'd a numerous band,
As worthless as could be.

Two noblemen amongst this set
Were hated above all;
And many were the lords who met,
To work the Spencer's fall.
Success attends these foe-men's strife,
Lord Hugh is doom'd to die;
And in his happiest hours of life,
That precious life did fly.

His manly form did never more,

Bless Isabel's fond eyes;
With him—the joys of life were o'er,
For him—the maiden dies.
Yet still the spirit fondly clings,
To what in life has been,
Thus Isabel, it nightly brings
To this beloved scene.

But when her feet have touch'd the ground,
With silent, noiseless tread;
No tender lover there is found,
He's number'd with the dead.
No more of love the tender strain,
Falls on her list'ning ear,
In life—her joy, was turn'd to pain,
Her hope—gave place to fear.

'Tis then, that dread laments they hear,
Who pass by night that way;
Which the scar'd traveller, so clear,
Hears till returning day;
When re-embarks sad Isabel,
That spectre shade so fair;
Then dashing in the water's swell,
She vanishes in air.

No trace remains in Sol's bright ray,
Of boat or awful spright;
For grief—or guilt conceived by day,

Conspicuous is at night.
Thus Isabel's unearthly woe,
Remain'd for many years;
But as our superstitions go,
So go unfounded fears

CAROLINE MAXWELL.

HARVEST HOME

(To the Editor of the Mirror.)

Sir,—Wishing to add to your numerous accounts of our local customs, I send you a description of the manner of celebrating harvest home in Westmoreland.

The farmers of Appleby, Kirby, Thore, and many of the neighbouring and low towns thereabout, devote the last day of the harvest to mirth and festivity. The men generally endeavour to get the corn all in pretty early in the day; and at the last cart-load the horses are decked by the men with ears of corn and flowers and ribands; and then the lasses' straw- bonnets, who, in return, perform the same compliments on them. Thus they move on through the lanes and roads, till they reach the farm-yard, shouting, "Harvest Home," and singing songs in their way. When they reach the farm-yard, they set up an exulting shout, and ale is distributed to them by their master. About nine o'clock, a supper is prepared for them in their master's house. A wheat-sheaf is brought, and placed in the middle of the room, decorated with ribands and flowers, and corn is hung in various parts of the room. The supper mostly consists of some good old English dish, (of which there is plenty,) and the jolly farmer presides at the head of the table. After the cloth is cleared, liquor in

abundance is brought forward, and the "president" sings, (not a *Non Nobis Domine*,) but a good, true, mirth-stirring song, and then the *fun* commences; singing and dancing alternately occupy the evening, and the bottle circulates speedily, and the festival generally breaks up about midnight.

Thus, Mr. Editor, is harvest home spent in that county, and I send you the only account I can furnish of the harvest merriments, hoping some of your correspondents will add to my little mite.

W.H.H.

STANZAS TO, AND IN ILLUSTRATION OF, A LANDSCAPE BY CLAUDE

(For the Mirror.)

Young land of beauty, and divine repose!
Art thou a dream? a vision from on high
Unveiling Paradise? uncurt'ning those
Supernal glories, Eden doth supply
To glad immortals? o'er thee, ev'ning glows,
Brilliant, as seraph's blush—pure as his breath—
Smiling an antidote to tears and death!

Young land of beauty! (fancy could not dwell
In lovelier, albeit her rainbow wings
Fold, but in fairy-spheres) a living well
Of sylvan joy art thou, whose thousand springs
Gush, sinless, gladness, peace ineffable,
And that luxuriousness of being, which
Mocks eloquence: warm, holy, ruby, rich.

Young land of beauty! 'neath thy sun-ting'd shades,
Beside thy lake, crystal in roseate light,

Enam'ring music breathes: there, raptur'd maids
In dances, with adoring youths unite;
There, magic voices sigh in song; and glades
With birds and blossoms, all but vital, seem
Entranc'd, like hermit in divinest dream!

Young land of beauty! art thou but a ray
Of intellect, emerg'd from one? and shrin'd,
That thine immortal light may dim the day,
Faint struggling thro' some lowlier, cloudier, mind:
Dream of the painter-poet! oh! we'll say,
Lur'd to ethereal musings by thy thrall,
Tho' dream in part, no dream art thou in all!

M.L.B

MARCH OF "IMPROVEMENT."

(For the Mirror.)

An old Subscriber has sent us the following *questions* on the improvement of the metropolis, which we insert as a castle-building *jeu d'esprit* rather than as a serious matter. They will, however, serve for the *committee of taste* to crack after dinner, and give a zest for their *magna bona*.

Ought not the new palace to have been built in the richest Gothic style, so as to have deviated in appearance from every other edifice in the metropolis; and to have been erected on the north bank of the Serpentine?—And, if the *dome* of the present erection is not to be removed, cannot it be ornamented?—Or could not the pediment, fronting the park, be raised another story, so as to hide it (the dome) from that side?—Indeed, would not the palace be much improved by such an alteration? I think if it be left as it is, when the wings are raised to the height of the body of the palace, (though they are a wonderful improvement upon those first erected) the whole will have a very flat appearance.—Are not the statues of Neptune, &c., much too small, and the other ornaments, consisting of representations of warlike implements, &c., much too heavy to look well?

Is not the Borough a very improper place for the king's,

or any other, college?—Is it not the very mart of trade, and consequently ever noisy and in confusion?—And what a magnificent improvement would its erection near Westminster Abbey be to that ancient and very sumptuous pile. Could it not be erected from Tothill Street, and extend towards Storey's Gate?—And should it not be built in the Gothic style to correspond with the abbey? The seat of learning and wisdom is in that neighbourhood (Westminster School, Houses of Parliament, Courts of Justice, &c.); therefore it is the place best adapted for the erection of a college. Ought not also those disgraceful erections close to the abbey's western front, to be instantly removed?—And ought not the house of the dean, &c. to be also rebuilt in the Gothic style, and extend from Tothill Street towards St. John's church? I never see this abbey (the glory of London) without feeling utterly disgusted at the surrounding objects. The great tower, also, should be erected in the same style as the other two. But should not the council office, and Somerset House, be finished before other works are begun?—Should not the interior of the dome of St. Paul's be repainted and gilt, and the windows (particularly the three over the altar) be of stained glass?—And should not the railing on the top of the dome on the outside (which is much decayed) be replaced by railing made of the new metal lately invented, which imitates brass, and does not tarnish?—Would not the entrance for the public, from Piccadilly into St. James's Park, be much better two or three yards from the new royal archway, as it will be very likely to be injured by people

passing so near it?

Would not a Swiss cottage and a Chinese temple very materially improve the appearance of the islands in St. James's Park; and two or three vessels upon that water, and the Serpentine in Hyde Park, also add very much to the effect?—Would a tower, surrounded by a railing, as the monument, and surmounted by a statue of George III. (looking with surprise to see what his son had done), or Canning, or Byron, be a proper sort of monument as a tribute to their memories; and to be erected in the centre of the Regent's Park? Oh! what a prospect would its summit command! Would not magnificent baths for males and females, erected on either side of Waterloo Place, and to be supplied from the new fountain, be a great addition to the beauty and comfort of this great city.

These additions, alterations, and improvements, ought to be made now; and I doubt not, in the course of time, all warehouses will be removed from the banks of the Thames, above Blackfriars' Bridge, and that streets will run by the waterside as at Dublin. Also the time will come when the houses round St. Paul's will be pulled down and rebuilt in the Grecian style of architecture to correspond with the cathedral (the wonder of England), and be re-erected at a much greater distance from it.

I would also ask, "should not the chimney pots upon the palaces in Regent Street, &c. be of a slate colour?—Should not all tiles be painted of the same colour? (slate.)—Should not the names of streets be more particularly attended to?"

INTRODUCTION OF SILK INTO EUROPE

(For the Mirror.)

The frequency of open hostilities between the Emperor of Constantinople and the monarchs of Persia, together with the increasing rivalry of their subjects in the trade with India, gave rise to an event which produced a considerable change in the silk trade. As the use of that article, both in dress and furniture, became more general in the court of the Greek emperors, who imitated and surpassed the sovereigns of Asia in splendour and magnificence; and as China, in which, according to the concurring testimony of oriental writers, the culture of silk was originally known, *(Herlelot. Biblioth. Orient.)*, still continued to be the only country which produced that valuable commodity; the Persians improving the advantages which their situation gave them over the merchants from the Arabian Gulf, supplanted them in all the marts of India, to which silk was brought by sea from the east. Having it likewise in their power to molest or to cut off the caravans, which, in order to procure a supply for the Greek empire, travelled by land to China through the northern provinces of their kingdom, they entirely engrossed that

branch of commerce. Constantinople was obliged to depend on the rival power for an article which luxury reserved and desired as essential to elegance. The Persians, with the usual rapacity of monopolists, raised the price of silk to such an exorbitant height, that the Emperor Justinian eager, not only to obtain a full and certain supply of a commodity which was become of indispensible use, but solicitous to deliver the commerce of his subjects from the exactions of his enemies, endeavoured, by means of his ally, the christian monarch of Abyssinia, to wrest some portion of the silk trade from the Persians. In this attempt he failed; but when he least expected it, he, by an unforeseen event, attained in some measure (A.D. 55.) the object which he had in view. Two Persian monks having been employed as missionaries to some christian churches which were established (as we are informed by Cosmas) in different parts of India, had penetrated into the country of the Seres, or China. There they observed the labours of the silk-worm, and became acquainted with all the arts of men in working up its productions into such a variety of elegant fabrics. The prospect of gain, or perhaps an indignant zeal excited by seeing this lucrative branch of commerce engrossed by unbelieving nations, prompted them to repair to Constantinople. There they explained to the emperor the origin of silk, as well as the various modes of preparing and manufacturing it—mysteries hitherto unknown, or very imperfectly understood in Europe, and encouraged by his liberal promises, they undertook to bring to the capital a sufficient

number of those wonderful insects to whose labours man is so much indebted. This they accomplished by conveying the eggs of the silk-worm in a hollow cane. They were hatched by the heat of a dunghill; fed with the leaves of a wild mulberry-tree, and they multiplied and worked in the same manner as in those climates where they first became objects of human attention and care. Vast numbers of these insects were soon reared in different parts of Greece, particularly in the Peloponnesus. Sicily afterwards undertook to breed silk-worms with equal success, and was imitated from time to time in several towns of Italy. In all these places extensive manufactures were established and carried on with silk of domestic production. The demand for silk from the East diminished, of course. The subjects of the Greek emperors were no longer obliged to have recourse to their enemies, the Persians, for a supply of it; and a considerable change took place in the nature of the commercial intercourse between Europe and India.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.