

VARIOUS

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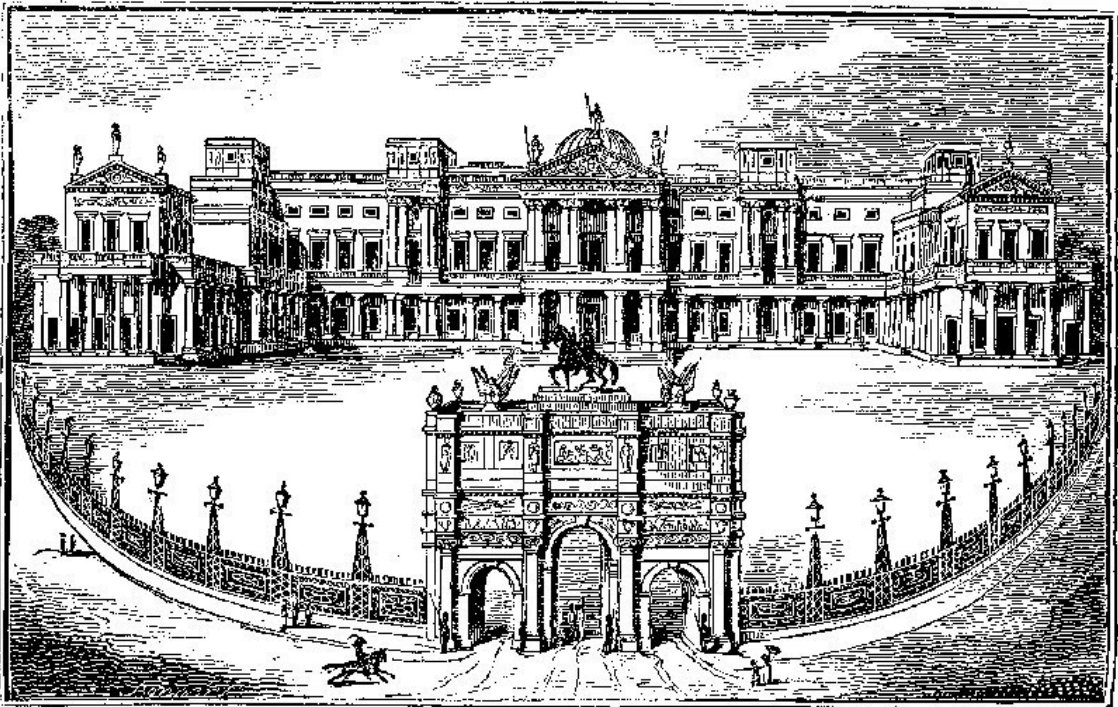
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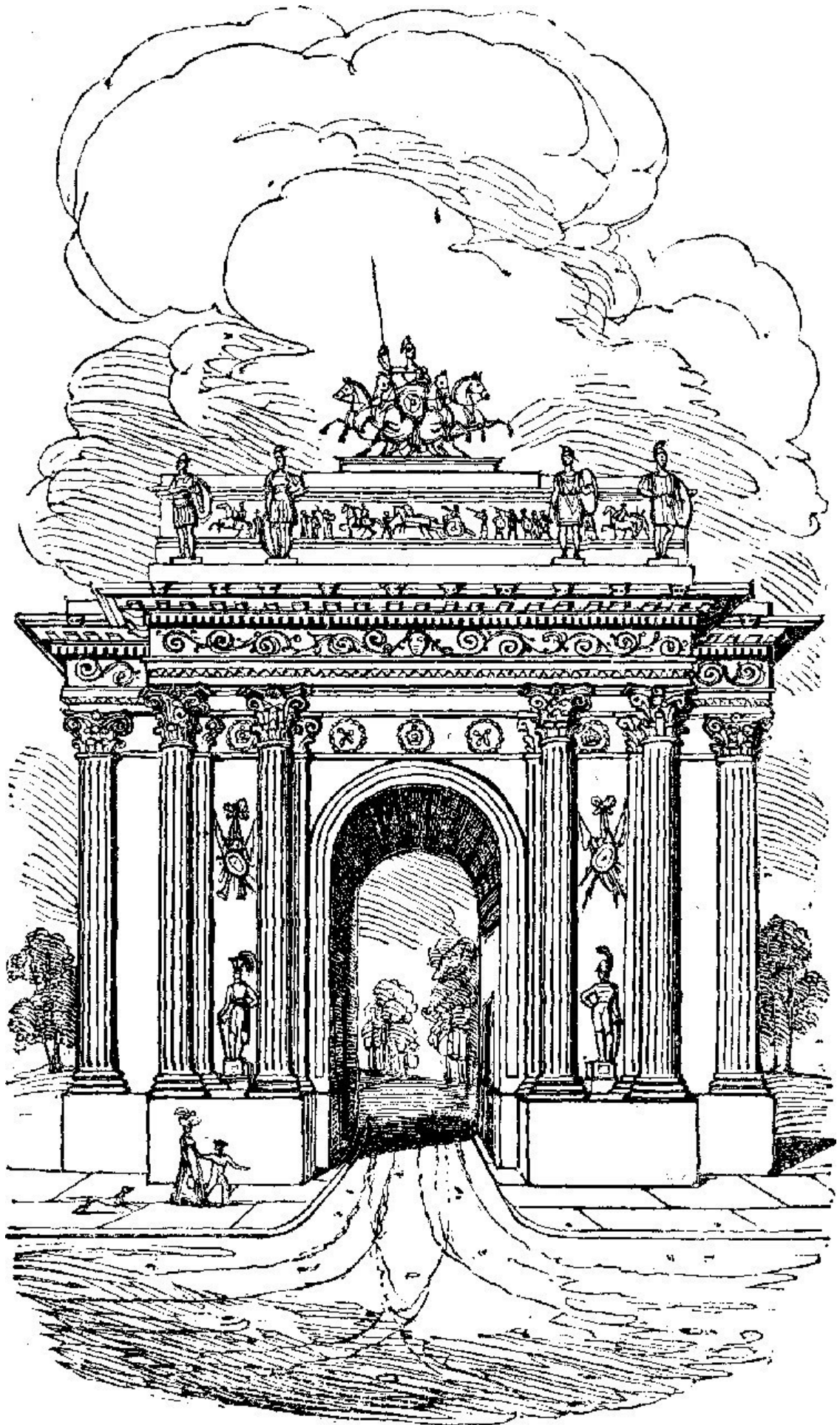
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THE NEW PALACE IN ST. JAMES'S PARK

Palaces are at all times objects of national interest, or rather they are national concerns. They belong to the attributes of royalty, and in some instances have been erected by a grateful people to celebrate the virtues of patriot princes. We therefore make no apology to our readers for occupying so large a portion of the present Supplementary Number with the representations and details of the New Palace, (the exterior of which is just now completed,) and of the consequent improvements in the adjoining Parks; since we are persuaded that the patriotic feelings of our subscribers will hail them as subjects of paramount importance. The great Lord Bacon, who treated these matters with the gravity of a philosopher, in his "Essays," gives a "brief model of a princely palace;" and in our times Napoleon is known to have expended many thousands in restoring the gilding of the palace at Versailles—although the extravagance of its founders paved the way for the events in which he distinguished himself.

In architectural improvement, London has made greater advances since the late peace, than in the entire century which preceded that auspicious event. Being unquestionably the richest, the largest, and most populous city of Europe, the seat of a wealthier court, and a more opulent body of nobility and gentry than any other metropolis, it seems only a reasonable expectation that it should likewise excel all others in the number and magnificence of its public edifices and private dwellings. Such, however, is not the case; for, till within the last few years, that most splendid and impressive of all the arts, architecture, has been almost wholly neglected.

The architectural superiority of London, such as it is, consists in the number, size, and neatness of its principal streets and squares. Petersburg, Berlin, Naples, Turin, Geneva, Antwerp, Edinburgh, and other places, have perhaps finer streets than any in London, but in respect to their number there is no comparison. In *churches*, London will probably be admitted, after Rome, to take the first rank among the cities of Europe; but in *palaces*, London is confessedly excelled by almost every other capital in Europe, both in public and private edifices of this description; of the former, Whitehall, Carlton-house, (now almost demolished,) and the Mansion-house, comprise the whole list of buildings any way entitled to the appellation of palaces—and even *their* title has often been thought disputable.

To rescue our national character from this opprobrium, or ill-timed compliment to royalty, the remodelling of Buckingham-house, or rather the erection of the *New Palace in St. James's Park*, was decided on; and how far this design has been accomplished in the palace, we leave it to the taste of our readers to determine. Various piecemeal, not to say absurd, descriptions have, during the progress of the work, appeared in the London and provincial papers, many of them originating in party feeling; but the structure has now so far advanced to completion as to enable every spectator to estimate its merits and demerits; and we are sorry to add, that much of the censure bestowed on the palace during its progress (though with bad motives) now proves essentially correct. The name of the designer at present remains a secret. His majesty is known to possess exquisite taste, and it is scarcely believed that his approbation can have justified some of the incongruities, not to say enormities of the building; be this as it may, the general public feeling is that of disappointment and regret.

The annexed view is of the central entrance front, facing east, towards the Canal and the Horse Guards, taken from the Wall in St. James's Park. The first objection is the site, in itself insuperable, as will appear from the following remarks on the subject by Mr. Loudon, editor of the *Gardener's Magazine*:—

"Had the problem," he says, "been proposed (how) to alter Buckingham House and gardens, so as to render the former as unhealthy a dwelling as possible, it could not have been better solved than by the works now executed. The belt of trees which forms the margin of these grounds, has long acted as the sides of a basin, or small valley, to retain the vapours which were collected within;

and which, when the basin was full, could only flow out by the lower extremity, over the roofs of the stables and other buildings at the palace. What vapour did not escape in this manner, found its way through between the stems of the trees which adjoin these buildings, and through the palace windows. Now, all the leading improvements on the grounds have a direct tendency to increase this evil. They consist in thickening the marginal belts on both sides of the hollow with evergreens, to shut out London: in one place substituting for the belt an immense bank of earth, to shut out the stables; and in the area of the grounds forming numerous flower-gardens, and other scenes with dug surfaces, a basin, fountains, and a lake of several acres. The effect of all this will be a more copious and rapid exhalation of moisture from the water, dug earth, and increased surface of foliage; and a more complete dam to prevent the escape of this moist atmosphere, otherwise than through the windows, or over the top of the palace. The garden may be considered as a pond brimful of fog, the ornamental water as the perpetual supply of this fog, the palace as a cascade which it flows over, and the windows as the sluices which it passes through. We defy any medical man, or meteorologist, to prove the contrary of what we assert, viz. that Buckingham Palace is a dam to a pond of watery vapour, and that the pond will always be filled with vapour to the level of the top of the dam. The only question is, how far this vapour is entitled to be called *malaria*. We have the misfortune to be able to answer that question experimentally.... A man must be something less or more than a king, to keep his health in that palace for any length of time."

On the subject of *malaria*, an Italian term for the produce of marshy lands, the attention of the public has lately been powerfully excited by a series of essays by Dr. Macculloch, an abstract of which will be found at page 252, of our accompanying Number, under the head "Arcana of Science." Dr. M. is supported in his opinion by Lord Bacon and other philosophers; and he shows, that though it is commonly supposed that standing waters, when clear and free from smell, and all running waters, are perfectly salubrious, they may, in fact, be nearly as injurious as those that are putrid and stagnant; "that, besides proper marshes, fresh and salt meadows, and wet pasture lands generally, all woods, coppices, thickets, rivers, lakes, ponds, *ornamental waters*, pools, ditches—*plashy* and *limited spots of ground generally*, &c., send forth more or less of this noxious vapour; that wherever, in short, any chemical compound of the vegetable elements is wetted, or held in solution by water, there the poison in question may be or will be produced, *provided the temperature be sufficiently high*; that the smallest spot coming under any of the above denominations is sufficient to produce *malaria*, and a *single inspiration of that malaria to produce disease*."

Such is the theory of Dr. Macculloch; but, as observed by a contemporary, Why should he have observed any delicacy on this subject?—why not have, long since, denounced the whole of the ponds in St. James's, the Green, and Hyde Parks, Kensington Gardens, and the Regent's Park, as pestilential nuisances to all around them? Besides, he states that *malaria* is only generated in *hot weather*; so that the palace, being intended as a *winter* residence, the health of our gracious sovereign will, we hope, not be endangered by his residence. That there is much show of reason in this objection, cannot be denied; at the same time it should be remembered, that in all great undertakings the conflicting prejudices and caprices of private interests generally work too prominent a part: hence, opinions should be entertained with caution.

It is now time to speak of the *architectural* character of the palace. The main front represented in our engraving, forms three sides of a quadrangle, thus II, the area being not far from equal, and forming a clear space of about 250 feet in diameter. The central entrance is a portico of two orders of architecture in height; the lower is the Doric, copied from the temple of Theseus at Athens; the upper is the Corinthian, resembling that style in the Pantheon at Rome. This portico is so contrived, that upon the ground carriages can drive through it; while above, there is an open and spacious gallery, covered by a pediment on which statues are to be placed, and under which is a long panel filled with figures in high relief. It is understood that this entrance is to be exclusively appropriated for the admission of his Majesty and the royal family. The above union of two of the Greek orders is much

censured: indeed a harmonious union of any two of the Greek orders has never been an easy task. In the Doric architecture of the ground story, the usual magnificence of this order is wanting; the columns being merely surmounted by what is termed "an architrave cornice," with the mutiles; while the frieze, with its rich triglyphs and metopes is altogether omitted. The Corinthian order of the upper story is altogether more worthy of admiration, notwithstanding that some objection has been raised to the "disproportionately slender columns, when contrasted with the massive shafts beneath them." Here, too, the entire frieze, with its emblematical embellishments of the British crown, surrounded with laurel, and alternate leaves of the rose, the thistle and shamrock, is sure to attract the eye of the spectator: the character and effect of the whole is truly British.

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