

# VARIOUS

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**Various**  
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**MERCERS' HALL,  
AND CHEAPSIDE**



The engraving is an interesting illustration of the architecture of the metropolis in the seventeenth century, independent of its local association with names illustrious in historical record.

In former times, when persons of the same trade congregated together in some particular street, the mercers principally assembled in West Cheap, now called Cheapside, near where the above hall stands, and thence called by the name of "the Mercery." In Lydgate's *London Lyckpenny*, are the following lines alluding to this custom:

Then to Chepe I began me drawne,

When much people I saw for to stand;  
One offered me velvet, silk and lawne  
And another he taketh me by the hand.  
Here is Paris thread, the finest in the land.

Pennant thus describes the principal historical data of the spot:

"On the north side of Cheapside, (between Ironmonger Lane and Old Jewry,) stood the Hospital of St. Thomas of Acon, founded by Thomas Fitz-Theobald de Helles, and his wife Agnes, sister to the turbulent Thomas Becket, who was born in the house of his father, Gilbert, situated on this spot. The mother of our meek saint was a fair Saracen, whom his father had married in the Holy Land. On the site of this house rose the hospital, built within twenty years after the murder of Thomas; yet such was the repute of his sanctity, that it was dedicated to him, in conjunction with the blessed Virgin, without waiting for his canonization. The hospital consisted of a master and several brethren, professing the rule of St. Austin. The church, cloisters, &c. were granted by Henry VIII. to the Mercers' Company, who had the gift of the mastership.<sup>1</sup>

"In the old church were several monuments; among others, one to James Butler, Earl of Ormond, and Joan his wife, living in the beginning of the reign of Henry VI. The whole pile was destroyed in the great fire, but was very handsomely rebuilt by the Mercers' Company, who have their Hall here.

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<sup>1</sup> Tanner.

"In this chapel the celebrated, but unsteady, archbishop of Spalato, preached his first sermon in 1617, in Italian, before the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a splendid audience; and continued his discourses in the same place several times, after he had embraced our religion; but having the folly to return to his ancient faith, and trust himself among his old friends at Rome, he was shut up in the Castle of St. Angelo, where he died in 1625."

"The Mercers' Company is the first of the twelve. The name by no means implied, originally, a dealer in silks: for *mercery* included all sorts of small wares, toys, and haberdashery; but, as several of this opulent company were merchants, and imported great quantities of rich silks from Italy, the name became applied to the Company, and all dealers in silk. Not fewer than sixty-two mayors were of this Company, between the years 1214 and 1762; among which were Sir John Coventry, Sir Richard Whittington, and Sir Richard and Sir John Gresham."

The front in Cheapside, which alone can be seen, is narrow, but floridly adorned with carvings and architectural ornaments. The door is enriched with the figures of two cupids, mantling the arms, festoons, &c. and above the balcony, it is adorned with two pilasters, entablature, and pediment of the Ionic order; the intercolumns are the figures of Faith and Hope, and that of Charity, in a niche under the cornice of the pediment, with other enrichments. The interior is very handsome. The hall and great parlour are wainscoted with oak, and adorned with Ionic pilasters. The ceiling is of fret-work, and the stately piazzas are

constituted by large columns, and their entablature of the Doric order.

The arms of the Mercers, as they are sculptured over the gateway, present for their distinguishing feature a demi-virgin with dishevelled hair: it was in allusion to this circumstance, that in the days of pageantry, at the election of Lord Mayor, a richly ornamented chariot was produced, in which was seated a young and beautiful virgin, most sumptuously arrayed, her hair flowing in ringlets over her neck and shoulders, and a crown upon her head. When the day's diversions were over, she was liberally rewarded and dismissed, claiming as her own the rich attire she had worn.

From this place likewise was formerly a solemn procession by the Lord Mayor, who, in the afternoon of the day he was sworn at the Exchequer, met the Aldermen; whence they repaired together to St. Paul's, and there prayed for the soul of their benefactor, William, Bishop of London, in the time of William the Conqueror, at his tomb. They then went to the churchyard to a place where lay the parents of Thomas â Becket, and prayed for all souls departed. They then returned to the chapel, and both Mayor and Aldermen offered each a penny.

Attached to the original foundation or hospital was a grammar-school, which has been subsequently continued at the expense of the Mercers' Company, though not on the same spot. It was for some time kept in the Old Jewry, whence it has been removed to College Hill, Upper Thames Street. Among the

masters may be mentioned William Baxter, nephew to the non-conformist, Richard Baxter, and author of two Dictionaries of British and Roman Antiquities.

Nearly opposite the entrance to Mercers' Hall, is a handsome stone-fronted house, built by Sir Christopher Wren. The houses adjoining the Hall were of similar ornamental character; although the unenclosed shop-fronts present a strange contrast with some of the improvements and superfluities of modern times. The Hall front has lately been renovated, and presents a rich display of architectural ornament.

# THE LONE GRAVES

(For the Mirror.)

Why should their sleep thus silent be, from streams and  
flow'rs away,  
While wanders thro' the sunny air the cuckoo's mellow lay;  
Those forms, whose eyes reflected heaven in their mild depth  
of blue,  
Whose hair was like the wave that shines o'er sands of golden  
hue?

Are these the altars of their rest, the pure and sacred shrines;  
Where Memory, rapt o'er visions fled, her holy spell  
combines?  
The sire, the child, oh, waft them back to their delightful dell,  
When, like a voice from heavenly lands, awakes the curfew  
bell.

And have they no remembrance here, the cheeks that softly  
glow'd,  
The amber hair, that, on the breeze, in gleaming tresses  
flow'd,  
The hymn which hail'd the Sabbath morn,—the fix'd and  
fervid eye;

Must these sweet treasures of the heart in shade and silence  
lie?

Oh, no! thou place of sanctities! a ray has from thee gone,  
Dearer than noontide's gorgeous light, or Sabbath's music  
tone;

A spirit! whose bright ark is far beyond the clouds and waves,  
Albeit there is a sunless gloom on these, their lonely graves!

*REGINALD AUGUSTINE.*

# BAGLEY WOOD

(For the Mirror.)

Bagley is situated about two miles and a half from Oxford, on the Abingdon-road, and affords an agreeable excursion to the Oxonians, who, leaving the city of learning, pass over the old bridge, where the observatory of the celebrated Friar Bacon was formerly standing. The wood is large, extending itself to the summit of a hill, which commands a charming panoramic view of Oxford, and of the adjacent country. The scene is richly diversified with hill and dale, while the spires, turrets, and towers of the university, rise high above the clustering trees, filling the beholder with the utmost awe and veneration. During the summer, this rustic spot presents many cool retreats, and love-embowering shades; and here many an amour is carried on, free from suspicion's eye, beneath the wide umbrageous canopy of nature.

Gipsies, or *fortune-tellers*, are constantly to be found in Bagley Wood; and many a gay Oxonian may be seen in the company of some wandering Egyptian beauty. So partial, indeed, are several of the young men of the university to the tawny tribe, that they are frequently observed in their *academicals*, lounging round the picturesque tents, having *their* fortunes told; though, it

must be remarked, their countenances usually evince a waggish incredulity on those occasions, and they appear much more amused with the novel scene around them than gratified with the favourable predictions of the wily Egyptians.

The merry gipsies of Bagley Wood might well sing with *Herrick*

"Here we securely live, and eat  
The cream of meat;  
And keep eternal fires  
By which we sit, *and do divine.*"

*G. W. N.*

# EATING "MUTTON COLD."

(For the Mirror.)

A correspondent in a late number asks for a solution of the expression, "eating mutton cold." If the following one is worth printing, it is much at your service and that of the readers of the MIRROR.

I consider then that it has simply the same meaning as that of "coming a day after the fair." To come at the end of a feast when the various viands (always including mutton as being easy of digestion for dyspeptic people) were still warm, though cut pretty near to the bone, would, by most persons, particularly aldermanic "bodies," be considered sufficiently vexatious; how doubly annoying then must it be to come so late as to find the meats more than half cold, and, perhaps, but little of them left even in that anti-epicurean state! Whoever has been unfortunate enough to miss a fine fat haunch either of venison or mutton, which, smoking on the board, even Dr. Kitchiner would have pronounced fit for an emperor, cannot but enter deeply and feelingly into the disappointment of that guest who, arriving, through some misdate of the invitation card, on the day subsequent to the feast, finds but, *horribile dictu*, cold lean ham, cold pea-soup, cold potatoes, and finally, *cold mutton*.

Goldsmith's idea certainly was that Burke was never able to say, in the words of the Roman adage, *in tempore veni quod rerum omnium est primum*; but rather in plain English, "confound my ill luck, I never yet was invited to a feast but I either missed it in toto, or came so late as to be obliged to eat my mutton cold, a thing, which of all others, I most abhor." HEN. B.

# POOL'S HOLE, DERBYSHIRE

(For the Mirror.)

This cave is said to have taken its title from a notorious robber of that name, who being declared an outlaw, found in this hole a refuge from justice, where he carried on his nocturnal depredations with impunity. Others insist that this dismal hole was the habitation of a hermit or anchorite, of the name of Pool. Of the two traditions, I prefer the former. It is situated at the bottom of *Coitmos*, a lofty mountain near Buxton. The entrance is by a small arch, so low that you are forced to creep on hands and knees to gain admission; but it gradually opens into a vault above a quarter of a mile in length, and as some assert, a quarter of a mile high. It is certainly very lofty, and resembles the roof of a Gothic edifice. In a cavern to the right called Pool's Chamber, there is a fine echo, and the dashing of a current of water, which flows along the middle of the great vault, very much heightens the wonder.

On the floor are great ridges of stone—water is perpetually distilling from the roof and sides of this vault, and the drops before they fall produce a very pleasing effect, by reflecting numberless rays from the candles carried by the guides. They also form their quality from crystallizations of various flakes

like figures of fret work, and in some places, having long accumulated upon one another, into large masses, bearing a rude resemblance to various animals.

In the same cavity is a column as clear as alabaster, called *Mary Queen of Scots'* column, because it is said she reached so far; beyond which is a steep ascent for nearly a quarter of a mile, which terminates in a hollow in the roof, called the Needle's-eye, in which, when the guide places his candle, it looks like a star in the firmament. You only wonder when you get out how you attained such an achievement. W.H.H.

# CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

(To the Editor of the Mirror.)

Happening to look at No. 229, of your valuable Miscellany, in which you have given rather a lengthy account of Canterbury Cathedral, I was surprised to find no notice taken of the beautiful STONE SCREEN in the interior of the cathedral, which is considered by many, one of the finest specimens of florid Gothic in the kingdom. The following is a brief description of this ancient specimen of architecture:

This fine piece of Gothic carved work was built by Prior Hen. de Estria, in 1304. It is rich in flutings, pyramids, and canopied niches, in which stand six statues crowned, five of which hold globes in their hands, and the sixth a church. Various have been the conjectures as to the individuals intended by these statues. That holding the church is supposed to represent King Ethelbert, being a very ancient man with a long beard. The next figure appears more feminine, and may probably intend his queen, Bertha.

Before the havoc made in Charles's reign, there were thirteen figures representing Christ and his Apostles in the niches which are round the arch-doorway, and also twelve mitred Saints aloft along the stone work, where is now placed an organ.

At the National Repository, Charing Cross, there is exhibited a very correct model of this screen, in which the likenesses of the ancient kings are admirably imitated. P.T.

# ANCIENT STONE

(For the Mirror.)

There formerly stood about three miles from Carmarthen, at a place called New Church, a stone about eight feet long and two broad. The only distinguishable words upon it were "*Severus filius Severi.*" The remainder of the inscription, by dilapidation and time, was defaced. It is supposed that there had been a battle fought here, and that Severus fell. About a quarter of a mile from this was another with the name of some other individual. The above stone was removed by the owner of the land on which it stood, and is now used instead of a gate-post by him. I should imagine it was the son of Severus the Roman, who founded the great wall and ditch called after him, Severus' Wall and Ditch, and as there was a Roman road from St. David's, in Wales, to Southampton, it is not improbable that the Romans should come from thence to Carmarthen. W.H.

# THE COSMOPOLITE

## DIET OF VARIOUS NATIONS

(For the Mirror.)

To the artist, the amateur, the traveller, and man of taste in general, the following gleanings respecting the diet of various nations, are, in the spirit of English hospitality, cordially inscribed. The breakfast of the *Icelanders* consists of *skyr*, a kind of sour, coagulated milk, sometimes mixed with fresh milk or cream, and flavoured with the juice of certain berries; their usual dinner is dried fish, *skyr*, and rancid butter; and *skyr*, cheese, or porridge, made of Iceland moss, forms their supper; bread is rarely tasted by many of the *Icelanders*, but appears as a dainty at their rural feasts with mutton, and milk-porridge. They commonly drink a kind of whey mixed with water. As the cattle of this people are frequently, during winter, reduced to the miserable necessity of subsisting on dried fish, we can scarcely conceive their fresh meat to be so great a luxury as it is there esteemed. The poor of *Sweden* live on hard bread, salted or dried fish, water-gruel, and beer. The *Norwegian* nobility and

merchants fare sumptuously, but the lower classes chiefly subsist on the following articles:—oatmeal-bread, made in thin cakes (strongly resembling the havver-bread of Scotland) and baked only twice a-year. The oatmeal for this bread is, in times of scarcity, which in Norway frequently occur, mixed with the bark of elm or fir tree, ground, after boiling and drying, into a sort of flour; sometimes in the vicinity of fisheries, the roes of cod kneaded with the meal of oats or barley, are made into a kind of hasty-pudding, and soup, which is enriched with a pickled herring or mackerel. The flesh of the shark, and thin slices of meat salted and dried in the wind, are much esteemed. Fresh fish are plentiful on the coasts, but for lack of conveyances, unknown in the interior; the deficiency however, is there amply supplied by an abundance of game. The flesh of cattle pickled, smoked, or dry-salted, is laid by for winter store; and after making cheese, the sour whey is converted into a liquor called *syre*, which, mixed with water, constitutes the ordinary beverage of the Norwegians; but for festive occasions they brew strong beer, and with it intoxicate themselves, as also with brandy, when procurable. The maritime *Laplanders* feed on fish of every description, even to that of sea-dog, fish-livers, and train-oil, and of these obtaining but a scanty provision; they are even aspiring to the rank of the interior inhabitants, whose nutriment is of a more delicate description, being the flesh of all kinds of wild animals, herbaceous and carnivorous, and birds of prey; but bear's flesh is their greatest dainty. Rein-deer flesh is commonly

boiled in a large iron kettle, and when done, torn to pieces by the fingers of the *major domo*, and by him portioned out to his family and friends; the broth remaining in the kettle is boiled into soup with rye or oat-meal, and sometimes seasoned with salt. Reindeer blood is also a viand with these people, and being boiled, either by itself or mixed with wild berries, in the stomach of the animal from whence it was taken, forms a kind of black-pudding. The beverage of the Laplanders is milk and water, broths, and fish-soups; brandy, of which they are extremely fond, is a great rarity, and a glass of it will warm their hearts towards the weary sojourner, who, but for the precious gift, might ask hospitality at their huts in vain. The diet of the *Samoides*, resembles that of the Laplanders, save that they devour raw the flesh of fish and reindeer. For this people, all animals taken in the chase, and even those found dead, afford food, with the exception of dogs, cats, ermines, and squirrels. They have no regular time for meals, but the members of a family help themselves when they please from the boiler which always hangs over the fire. It is scarcely possible to name the variety of diet to be found among the Russian tribes; but even in cities, and at the tables of the opulent and civilized, late accounts mention the appearance of several strange and disgusting dishes, compounded of pastry, grain, pulse, vinegar, honey, fish, flesh, fruits, &c., not at all creditable to Russian gastronomic science. The diet of the *Polish*

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