

VARIOUS

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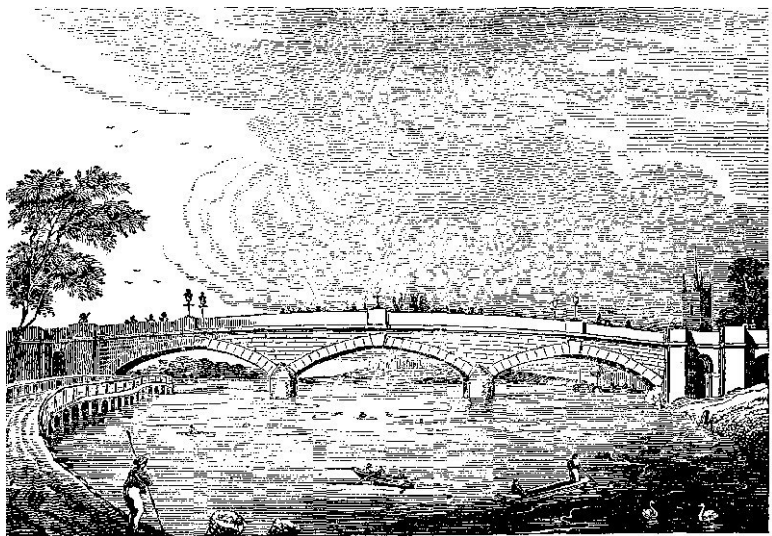
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*The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction / Volume 19, No. 548,
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STAINES NEW BRIDGE

This handsome structure has lately been completed, and was opened on Easter Monday last, April 24, by their Majesties and the Court passing over with suitable ceremony. This was a gala day for Staines and its vicinity; for, independently of the enthusiasm awakened by the visit of the popular Sovereign, the completion of so useful and ornamental a fabric must have been an occasion of no ordinary interest to every inhabitant of the district.

The *programme*, as the French would say, of the day's *fête* has been so recently given in the "chronicles of the times," that we need not repeat it. A few descriptive particulars of the Bridge, from *The Times* Journal, may be found to possess a more permanent value:—

"It consists of three very flat segmental arches of granite. The middle arch of 74 feet span, and the two side arches of 66 feet each; besides two side arches of 10 feet each for the towing-paths, and six brick arches of 20 feet span each, two on the Surrey side, and four on the Middlesex side, to allow the floods to pass off. The whole is surmounted by a plain, bold cornice, and block parapet of granite, with pedestal for the lamps, and a neat toll-house. The approaches to the Bridge on either side form gentle curves of easy ascent. The cost of the Bridge and approaches has been about 41,000l.

The appearance of the whole is very light and elegant. This is owing chiefly to the slight dimensions of the piers, which are smaller in proportion to the span of the arches they support than those of any other bridge in England; but this slight appearance does not, we understand, detract in any degree from their strength, or from the durability of the superincumbent structure."

From the same authority we gather this circumstantial account of the Bridges erected at Staines from the year 1262:

"The first erection mentioned in the archives of Staines, was a wooden bridge, said to have been erected in the year 1262; it was constructed of piles of oak driven into the bed of the river and covered with planks. We hear of no new erection from that period down to the year 1794; but from that year to the present, there have been not less than four new bridges in succession, and on nearly the same site. In the year 1794 and 1795, a new bridge, of three semicircular arches of stone, from the design of the celebrated Paul Sandby, was erected, but, from some defect in its construction, it lasted only five years, when it was replaced by a very elegant bridge of one arch, of 180 feet span, of cast iron, from the design of Mr. Thomas Wilson, the architect of the celebrated bridge over the river Weir, at Sunderland. The design was attributed to the noted author of the *Rights of Man*; but the arch designed by him was cast in the year 1790, by Messrs. Walkers, at Rotherham, whence it was brought to London, and erected at the bowling-green of the Yorkshire Stingo public-house,

where it was exhibited to the public; Paine not being able to defray the expense, the arch was taken down and carried back to Rotherham; part of it was afterwards used in the Sunderland bridge, and part, it is supposed, in the Staines bridge. This last, like its immediate predecessor, was not destined to last long, for it had scarcely been opened one month, when it was found necessary to close it to the public, the arch having sunk in a very alarming degree. His late Majesty King George the Third was said to have been among the last to pass over it. In this emergency the late Mr. Rennie was consulted, who pronounced the bridge altogether dangerous, in consequence of the weakness of the abutments. No alternative remained but to remove the iron bridge entirely, and patch up the old wooden bridge until a new one of wood was built. That bridge, which is the present old bridge, continued to stand, with various repairs and alterations, until the year 1828, when, in consequence of the decay of the piles, and the continual heavy expenses required to uphold it, the Commissioners determined to build a new one of more durable materials. Messrs. Rennie were therefore applied to for designs, and a bill was brought into Parliament to authorize the Commissioners to raise funds. The works were commenced in the spring of 1829, and on the 14th of September following the first stone was laid by their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Clarence (their present Majesties). Since then, the works have been carried on to their present completion under the direction of Mr. G. Rennie and Mr. Brown, the superintendents, and Messrs. Jolliffe and Banks, the

contractors."

The Engraving is from a Sketch by our obliging Windsor Correspondent: it was taken from the old bridge, whence the spectator enjoys a delightful view of Windsor Castle, through the centre arch of the new fabric.

By the way, we noticed the project of this new stone bridge, in connexion with our Engraving of the new church at Staines, in vol. xii. of *The Mirror*, August 30, 1828.

THE WRECK

(For the Mirror.)

No more, no more, o'er the dark blue sea,
Will the gallant vessel bound,
Fearless and proud as the warrior's plume
At the trumpet's startling sound;
No more will her banner assert its claim
To empire on the foam,
And the sailors cheer as the thunder rolls
From the guns of their wave-girt home!

Her white sails gleam'd like the sunny dawn
On the brow of the sapphire sky,
And her thunder echoed along the cliffs,
Awaking the seamew's cry;
Oh! it was glorious to see her glide
Triumphantly over the sea,
With her blue flag fluttering in the wind,
The symbol of victory.

But she lies forlorn in the breakers now,
Her stately masts are gone,
And cold are the hearts of the dauntless crew

That yielded their swords to none;
The gun is hush'd in her lofty sides,
And the flute on her silent deck;
Alas! that a queenly form like hers
Should ever have been a wreck!

Thus Hope's illusions droop away
From the heart which their beauty won,
And leave it forlorn as the gallant ship,
Ere its summer of life is begun.
It is peopled with lovely images,
As o'er the sea it glides,
But wreck'd is its deep idolatry
On the dark and stormy tides.

Deal.

G.R.C.

THE ARBALEST OF ROBIN HOOD

(To the Editor.)

In No. 538, of *The Mirror*, is described an elegant Cross-bow, and a desire expressed for information where such things are *now* to be seen. I have lived many years in Yorkshire, and have seen several kinds of these bows at *Kirklees Hall*, the seat of Sir George Armitage, a few miles from Huddersfield. Amongst those bows I saw one, at least six feet long; but some of them were not more than two or three feet in length. There were also a variety of weapons of war, with helmets, and some curious boots, which buttoned on the leg from top to the bottom, and had wooden soles. They were then kept in an attic on the top of the leads over the hall. Many of these relics are said to have belonged to the famous "Robin Hood," who lies buried in the park; the remains of the ancient grave-stone having been surrounded with a handsome iron railing, by the late Sir George Armitage; in the wall is an old inscription on brass; it is situated in a very gloomy place. Not far distant from his grave are the remains of a Nunnery, and a burial-ground, with tombs in it; but I could find no date, either in the house or on these tombs. One of the tombs has this inscription round its edge:

"Sweet Jesus of Nazareth, show mercy to Elizabeth Stainton, late Prioress of this place."

If an intelligent person were to call at the Hall, he would be able to gather much information of an authentic nature respecting Robin Hood.¹

JOHN BATEMAN

¹ We hope this note may meet the eye of some of our Yorkshire correspondents.

**SONGS, *Found in the Album
of a Delia Cruscan Poet***

(For the Mirror.)

THE HUMMING-BIRD

By T. MOORE, ESQ

Thou winged gem, whose starlike splendour
Gleams on the bosom of the rose,
I lore thy light when skies are tender,
And winds are wandering to repose.
The Grecian lute, the Moorish song,
And Crockford's home, with all that's in it,
May challenge fame from many a throng,
But thou, *alone*, fair bird, canst win it!

I've often watch'd thy plumage glancing
So evanescent in thy bower,
And heard thy silver voice entrancing
Soothe me, as music soothes the flower.
Although diminutive as me,
Thy song is sweeter, who can doubt it?
So, as I cannot sing like thee,
I'll break my lute, and live without it.

G.R.C.

THE SKYLARK

By L.E.L

Thou minstrel of the sunny air,
Thy vocal fount is rich with song,
And fragrant breezes softly bear
Its silver melody along.

I love to hear thy liquid note
When bees are humming on the rose,
And in their sapphire ocean float
The stars prophetic of repose.

Thou feel'st the sunny influence
Like Memnon's fabled lyre of old,
And wanderest in the beam intense
Which turns the liquid air to gold.

The spirit's bright imaginings
Ne'er soar'd to loftier spheres than thee,
And if I had, thy fairy wings,
Afar from earthly haunts I'd flee.

Inspid are the weekly themes

Of -'s imbecile review,
Whose page with adulation teems,
And makes me "beautifully blue."

But cockney praise is ebbing fast,
And Sappho's lute has lost its power,
And surely my career is past
Like Summer's brightest, loveliest flower.

Arcades ambo, Moore and me
Are Delia Crusca's sweetest doves,
And ours too is the poetry
Which meditative beauty loves.

Sweet bird, farewell! and be it thine
To thrill the blue air with thy song;
But fame will wreath this brow of mine,
If I am right, and *Pope* is wrong.

G.R.C.

DOMESTIC LIFE IN AMERICA

(In a Letter from a Correspondent at Cincinnati.)

This town is far superior to our late place of sojourn, Pittsburgh, being spacious and clean, with handsome houses and wood for fuel. Pittsburgh, on the contrary, is dirty and confined, abounding in iron works burning coal, which gives forth a denser smoke than English coal. The houses in this place, when we visited it in 1818, were mostly of wood; these have been in general removed on wheels drawn by oxen and horses, and placed in the suburbs, whence they are now removing once more. Here are four markets well supplied with the necessaries, and even the luxuries, of life, including almost everything you can think of, and many things which you have never thought of. Apple butter, for instance, is one of the latter, and is made by stewing apples in new cider, after it has been boiled down to one-third of its bulk. It is sold at 6-1/4 cts. per quart, and is very delicious. The fruits of this country are abundant: apples are excellent, and in profusion; peaches are plentiful in most seasons, but sometimes totally fail; grapes grow wild and *tame*, i.e. cultivated or imported; cherries are not very good, and dearer than at Pittsburgh; pears, strawberries, and raspberries are not

so choice as with you; quinces are plentiful and fine; wild plums perfume the whole house, like jessamine or mignonette, and are excellent for pies and tarts. The persimon is a fruit to which you are a stranger; it may be ranked with the plums, but has four stones, and is not fit to eat till bitten by the frost, when its austere and astringent taste disappears, and it becomes nearly transparent, and as rich and sweet as Guava jelly. The May-apple, or Mandrake, a wild fruit, is a favourite with our young folks; it grows on a single-steemed plant, usually one foot high, and is about the size of a plum, but with seeds, and in taste resembling a highly flavoured pear. The custard-apple, or paw-paw, is my favourite, and my boys go with me into the woods to gather them when ripe. In the summer, water melons, musk melons, nutmeg melons, and Cantaloupes may be seen in large heaps in the market, or in carts or wagons, at 6-1/4 to 25 and 50 cts. each, some weighing 40 lbs.

Egg-plants, which you have seen as curiosities, are here brought to market; some of them of purple colour, are as large as a child's carpet-ball: they are sliced and fried in butter, and I am told have the flavour of fried oysters. Cucumbers are unfortunately superabundant, and the free use of them induces a variety of diseases which are attributed to the climate. Squashes, cimolins, and cushas, are gourds which are mashed up with butter like turnips; pumpkins of this country are very sweet, and make delicious pies, or rather cheesecakes; cranberries are brought from a distance, and pine-apples are not very expensive, being

brought up the river from Bermuda.

Among the natural curiosities of the country, are the Stone Mountain in Carolina, which may rank in antiquity with Stonehenge. It is remarkable for a circular wall of stone of great thickness, probably built by a people distinct from the present race of Indians, who are quite incapable of erecting any building except a wigwam, or a pile of loose stones over a grave. Next is the Kentucky Cavern, or as it is called, on account of its magnitude, the Mammoth Cave. I have an account before me of its being explored by a party in 1826, who penetrated into this gloomy, though spacious, hollow for *fifteen miles*, and were prevented from proceeding from extreme fatigue; they found the names of persons written at the farthest part. There are numbers of rooms as they are called, which are yet unexplored. In one of these, a few miles from the entrance, there was discovered many years since, a female figure sitting with a mat wrapped round her shoulders; she was quite dried to a mummy, and has for many years been exhibited in a caravan, through the United States.

The river Ohio is here a quarter of a mile wide, and, as there is no bridge, the traffic into Kentucky is accommodated with steam ferry boats. Newport and Covington opposite, are pretty objects to look at from this side, but will not bear a nearer inspection. *Big Bone Lick*, where abundance of Mammoth bones have been discovered, is not far hence. Mr. Bullock of the London Museum is here, and has at the Lick discovered many rare specimens of bones, amongst which is a mammoth's head, with evidence of its

having been furnished with a trunk, and of course having been an elephant of immense size. He has also found hoofs of horses with their bones in a fossil state, proving that the horse has been indigenous. The horses in this town being a mixture from those of South America, where they are wild—are of various colours. Some are brown and white, like pointer dogs, others are spotted like Danish dogs, and some with curled hair. I saw one which was white as far as the fore-quarter, and the rest sorel.

An eye-witness has just related to me the following, which lately occurred in New Harmony:

A snake about two feet long, was seen to enter the hole inhabited by a crawfish,² from which he soon retreated, followed by the rightful tenant, who stopped in defensive attitude at the mouth of his habitation, raising his claws in defiance. The snake turned quickly round, and seized the head of the crawfish, as if to swallow him; but the crawfish soon put an end to the conflict by clasping the snake's neck with his claws, and severing the head completely from his body. This may appear marvellous; but Audubon tells a story of a rattle-snake chasing and over-taking a squirrel, which folks in America doubt.

² Is not this a species of land-crab?—ED. M.

Spirit of Discovery

POTTERY.³

(Continued from page 284.)

China

The name China, by which the ware that I am about to describe is known in England, shows sufficiently the country from which we have received it. The term porcelain, which is applied to it on the continent of Europe, is Italian; *porcellana* being in that language the name of those univalve shells forming the genus *cypraea* of the conchologist, which have a high arched back like that of the hog (*porco*, Ital.), and are remarkable for the white, smooth, vitreous glossiness of the surface about the mouth of the shell, and sometimes, as in the common cowry (*Cypraea moneta*), over the whole surface.

The introduction of the Chinese porcelain soon excited a strong desire in the various countries of Europe to imitate it;

³ By Mr. A. Aikin, in Trans. Soc. Arts.

but as the establishment of experimental manufactories for this purpose required the expenditure of considerable sums, and at a risk beyond the means of private persons, it is chiefly to the munificence of the sovereigns of Europe that the public are indebted for the first steps made in this interesting art. In Germany, chemists and mineralogists were set to work; the latter to seek for the most appropriate raw materials, and the former to purify and to combine them in the most advantageous proportions. The French government adopted the very sensible plan of instructing some of the Jesuit missionaries, who at that time had penetrated to the court of China, and into most of the provinces of that empire, to collect on the spot specimens of the materials employed by the Chinese themselves, together with the particulars of the process. The precise result thus obtained is not known; for as a considerable rivalry existed between the different royal manufactories of this ware, the most valuable information would of course be kept as secret as possible.

Of the European manufactories of porcelain, that established at Miessen, near Dresden, by Augustus Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, in the early part of the 17th century, was the first that aspired to a competition with the Chinese. In compactness of texture and infusibility it was reckoned perfect a hundred years ago. It is not quite so white as some of the French and English porcelains, but is inferior to none in its painting, gilding, and other decorations.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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