VARIOUS

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Содержание

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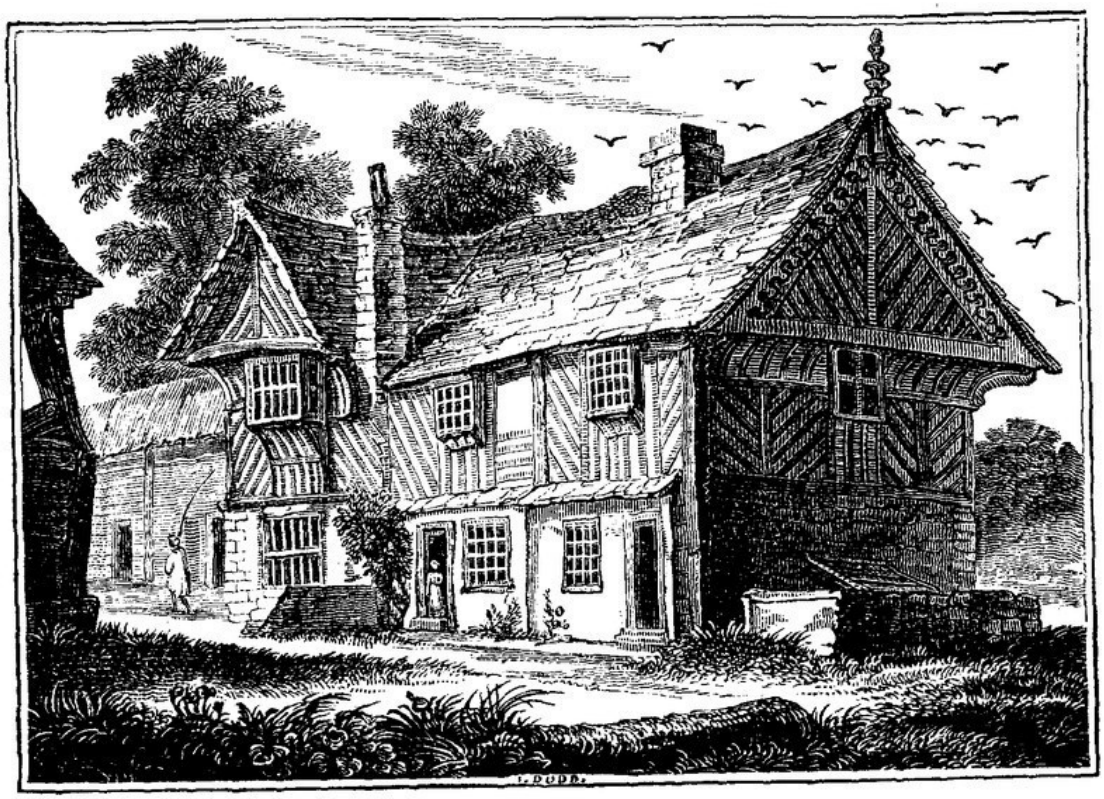
OLD HALL, IN DERBYSHIRE



This picturesque specimen of olden architecture stands upon the Norton Lees estate, on the northern verge of Derbyshire upon the adjacent county of York; about a mile from Sheffield, and eight miles north of Chesterfield, and but a short distance from Bolsover Castle, pictured in No. 566 of *The Mirror*. "The estate, in the reign of Henry VII., was the property of the family of the Blythes of Norton, two of whom arrived at great honours in the church; one of them, John, being the Bishop of Salisbury, and the other, Geoffrey, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry."[1] The above was the mansion of the family: its picturesqueness is of pleasing character; and our inquiry into the probable age of the structure has naturally enough led us into a few observations upon the early domestic architecture of this country. The subject is, however, too rife with interesting details for the present occasion; so that all we now purpose is by way of reference to the specimen or illustration before us.

The house at Norton Lees has been supposed by some persons to be as old as the reign of Richard II.; but Mr. Rhodes observes, "that it was erected many years after this period can hardly be doubted." Certain features of resemblance assist its appearance of antiquity, as the wooden

[1] Rhodes's Peak Scenery, Part IV.

framework, which is observable in the oldest specimens of house-building in this country. According to Strutt, the Saxons usually built their houses of clay, kept together by wooden frames; shortly after the Norman Conquest plaster was intermixed with timber, and subsequently the basement story was made of stone. The upper apartments were so constructed as to project over the lower, and considerable ornament both in carved wood and plaster was introduced about the doors and windows and roof of the building. Nevertheless, timber, with lath and plaster, and thatch for the roofs, constituted the chief materials in the dwellings of the English from an early period till near the close of the fourteenth century and beginning of the fifteenth, when bricks began to be used in the better sort of houses.[2] The mansion before us, as we have seen, is referred to the first-mentioned period. Mr. Rhodes, however, observes, "though composed of stone and wood, it is evident not one of the earliest structures of this description: it is indeed highly probable that it was built in the reign of the Seventh or Eighth Henry, but certainly not sooner. At this period the halls or family mansions of the yeomanry of the country had nearly all the same general character. Previously, but little stone was used in any of them."[3]; It is true that stone houses are mentioned nearly three centuries and a half before the date of the hall at Norton Lees, as settled by Mr. Rhodes; as we find them belonging to citizens of London in the reign of Henry II.; "and," observes Mr. Hallam, "though not often perhaps regularly hewn stones, yet those scattered over the soil, or dug from flint quarries, bound together with a very strong and durable cement, were employed in the construction of manorial houses, especially in the western counties and other parts where that material is easily procured. Harrison says, that few of the houses of the commonalty, except here and there in the west country towns, were made of stone. This was about 1570. Gradually, even in timber buildings, the intervals of the main beams were occupied by stone walls, or where stone was expensive, by mortar or plaster, intersected by horizontal or diagonal beams, grooved into the principal piers. This mode of building continued for a long time, and is familiar to our eyes in the older streets of the metropolis, and in many parts of the country."[4] Harrison, just quoted, says, "the ancient manours and houses of our gentlemen are yet and for the most part of strong timber, in framing whereof our carpenters have been and are worthily preferred before those of like science among all other nations. Howbeit, such as are lately builded are either of brick or hard stone, or of both."

The "Hall" before us may but ill accord with the present idea of one of these ancient residences; but, to explain away this error, it may be necessary to show in what respects the earliest "halls" (of which but few specimens are extant,) differed from those which remain in considerable numbers, to this day. A passage to this point will be found in Mr. Hallam's valuable work. "It is," observes this able historical writer, "an error to suppose that the English gentry were lodged in stately or even in well-sized houses. Generally speaking, their dwellings were almost as inferior to those of their descendants in capacity as they were in convenience. The usual arrangement consisted of an entrance-passage running through the house, with a hall on one side, a parlour beyond, and one or two chambers above, and on the opposite side, a kitchen, pantry, and other offices."[5] Such was the ordinary manor-house of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as appears not only from the documents and engravings, but

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[2] Britton's Architect. Antiq. ii. 86.

[3] Rhodes's Peak Scenery, Part iv. p. 4.—One of the oldest of these structures at present in the kingdom, is Moreton Hall in Cheshire, which, though a highly-ornamented building, is entirely composed of wood, and was erected at a time before stone was generally used even for the lower apartments. The earliest date about this ancient remain is 1559.

[4] Hist. Middle Ages, vol. iii., p. 420.

[5] Hist. of Whalley. In Strutt's view of Manners, we have an inventory of furniture in the house of Mr. Richard Fermor, ancestor of the Earl of Pomfret, at Easton in Northamptonshire, and another in that of Sir Adrian Foskewe. Both these houses appear to have been of the dimensions and arrangement mentioned. And even in houses of a more ample extent, the bi-section of the ground-plot by an entrance-passage, was, I believe, universal, and is a proof of antiquity. Haddon Hall and Penshurst still display this ancient arrangement, which has been altered in some old houses. About the reign of James I., or, perhaps, a little sooner, architects began to perceive the additional grandeur of entering the great hall at once. This apartment subsequently gave its name to the whole house.—See an interesting paper on Old English Halls, *Mirror*, vol. xviii. p. 92-108.

as to the latter period from the buildings themselves, sometimes, though not very frequently, occupied by families of consideration, more often converted into farm-houses, or distinct tenements. Larger structures were erected by men of great estates, during the reigns of Henry VI. and Edward IV.; but very few can be traced higher; and such has been the effect of time, still more through the advance or decline of families, and the progress of architectural improvement, than the natural decay of these buildings, that I should conceive it difficult to name a house in England, still inhabited by a gentleman, and not belonging to the order of castles, the principal apartments of which are older than the reign of Henry VII. The instances at least must be extremely few. Single rooms, windows, doorways, &c. of an earlier date, may perhaps not unfrequently be found; but such instances are always to be verified by their intrinsic evidence, not by the tradition of the place.[6]

It need scarcely be remarked, in conclusion, that the Hall at Norton Lees, as it appears to the reader, conveys but an imperfect idea of the ancient structure. The walls of the lower story entirely of stone, and the upper, stone and plaster intersected by wood, are original, as is probably the enriched gable, with the pinnacled ornament at its apex; beneath was originally a small bay window, which has been stopped up: the other gable, it is reasonable to conclude, once possessed similar enrichments. The chimneys are modern, since they are neither pyramidal in their terminations, as was the fashion of the 14th and 15th centuries, nor have they the long polygonal shafts of the Elizabethan and subsequent periods, which has caused chimneys to be characteristically termed "the wind-pipes of hospitality." The "Hall" would likewise appear to be divided into two tenements, which but ill assorts with its original appropriation; though we are not to consider these deviations as affecting the architectural character or identity.

[6] Hist. Middle Ages, vol. iii., p. 423.—The most remarkable fragment of early building which I have any where found mentioned is at a house in Berkshire, called Appleton, where there exists a sort of prodigy, an entrance-passage with circular arches in the Saxon style, which must probably be as old as the reign of Henry II. No other private house in England can, I presume, boast of such a monument of antiquity.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

A person named Goldsmith, who stated himself to be a nephew of the great Oliver Goldsmith, died a short time since of cholera, in the country. A correspondent of the *Morning Herald* observes, the assertion may be true, and states that Dr. Goldsmith had a brother, whose name he thinks was Charles, and whom he met in public company about thirty years since. In person he resembled the poet, and was a man of some pleasantry, sang a tolerable song, and, like his brother, had a good deal of oddity in his manner. He then resided at Somer's Town, and as the correspondent was informed, had been many years in the West Indies, whence he came to England possessed of a small independence. Some years since the correspondent made inquiry at Somer's Town for Charles Goldsmith, but was told that he had left his residence there for some years. He is anxious for some information respecting the latter history of the poet's brother: he has a faint idea of hearing he had some children by a native of the West Indies, and he thinks it probable that the first-named individual, lately deceased, might have been one of them. The settlement of this point may not be of general importance; but it leads the correspondent to mention that in the Temple churchyard, where he remembers the burial of Goldsmith, *there is no stone or other memorial to mark his grave*. So posterity, for nearly threescore years, have treated a man of genius, who, to quote Dr. Johnson's opinion, left no species of writing untouched, and adorned all to which he applied himself. "How different," observes the above correspondent, "the attention and honours paid to the memory of Walter Scott, scarcely cold in his coffin! a more voluminous writer certainly, but not a superior genius to the author of the *Deserted Village* and the *Vicar of Wakefield*." Goldsmith died in the Inner Temple. Aikin says he was buried with little attendance in the Temple church; the correspondent of the *Herald* states, in the *churchyard*, so that the poet's biographers are not even agreed WHERE he was buried. Yet, since his death, thousands of pounds have been expended in restoring the architecture of the Temple church, and one hears everlastingly of the rare series of effigies of Knights Templars: but a few pounds have not been spared for a stone to tell where the poor poet sleeps. True it is, that a monument has been erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey, with a Latin inscription, by Dr. Johnson, but the locality of his actual resting-place is untold. We may say with equal truth and justice—

Oh shame to the land of his birth!

PHILO.

THE SAVOYARD

By E.B. Impey, Esq

[The following ballad is founded on the melancholy fact of a Savoyard boy and his monkey having been found starved to death in St. James's Park during the night of a severe frost.]

Weary and wan from door to door
With faint and faltering tread,
In vain for shelter I implore,
And pine for want of bread.

Poor Jacko! thou art hungry too;
Thy dim and haggard eye
Pleads more pathetically true,
Than prayer or piercing cry.

Poor mute companion of my toil,
My wanderings and my woes!
Far have we sought this vaunted soil,
And here our course must close.

Chill falls the sleet; our colder clay
Shall to the morning light,
Stretch'd on these icy walks, betray
The ravages of night.

Scarce have I number'd twice seven years;
Ah! who would covet more?
Or swell the lengthen'd stream of tears
To man's thrice measur'd score?

Alas! they told me 'twas a land
Of wealth and weal to all;
And bless'd alike with bounteous hand
The stranger and the thrall.

A land whose golden vallies shame
Thy craggy wilds, Savoy,
Might well, methought, from want reclaim
One poor unfriended boy.

How did my young heart fondly yearn
To greet thy treach'rous shore!
And deem'd the while, for home-return
To husband up a store.

Why did I leave my native glen
And tune my mountain-lay,
To colder maids and sterner men
Than o'er our glaciers stray?

There pity dews the manly cheek
And heaves the bosom coy,
That quail'd not at the giddy peak
Which foils the fleet chamois.

Here—where the torrents voice would thrill
Each craven breast with fear;
For dumb distress or human ill
There drops no kindred tear.

The rushing Arc, the cold blue Rhone,
That in their channels freeze;
And snow-clad Cenis' heart of stone
Might melt ere one of these.

Why did I loathe my lowly cot
Where late I caroll'd free,
Nor felt, contrasted with my lot,
The pomp of high degree?

Lo! where to mock the houseless head
Huge palaces arise,
Whose board uncharitably spread
The unbidden guest denies.

O for the crumbs that reckless fall
From that superfluous board!
O for the warmth you gorgeous hall
And blazing hearth afford!

All unavailing is the prayer—
The proud ones pass us by;
Their chariots roll, their torches glare
Cold on the famish'd eye.

And yet a little from their need
Some poorer hands have spared:
And some have sighed, with little heed,
"Alas! poor Savoyard!"

And some have bent the churlish brow,
And curl'd the lip of scorn;
For they at home had brats enow,
And beggars British-born.

And some have scoff'd as proud to bear
Brute heart in human shape;
Nor drop nor morsel deign'd to share
With alien or with ape.

Poor Jacko! yet one soul can feel
Sad fellowship with thee;
And we have shared our scanty meal
In bitterness or glee.

Yes! we have shared our last—and here
Have little now to crave;
No bounty, save a passing tear,
No gift, beyond a grave.

Still let these arms to thy bare breast
Their lingering heat impart;
Come shroud thee in my tatter'd vest,
And nestle next my heart.

Partners in grief, in want allied,
E'en as we lived, we die;
So let one grave our relics hold,
Entwined, as thus we lie.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

EARLY INHABITANTS OF BRITAIN

(To the Editor.)

Your interesting columns have afforded me much gratification by the sketches of the manners of various nations. I am a thorough Englishman in principle, with a sprinkling, however, of German in my veins, and as the early history of this country is a point of great interest, if *The Mirror* can allow, I will offer a few *reflections*.

Caesar, speaking of our ancestors, calls them, in blunt and plain Latin "*Barbari*." Now Caesar was a disappointed man; he knew but little of this land, he invaded it wantonly, and left it gladly. The Briton was by no means so luxurious as the Roman, but it is wrong to call him a barbarian.

As priests generally (in such periods as those to which we allude,) take good care of themselves, and as the Druids were the chiefs, let us take a few cursory observations upon their manners and customs.

The Druids were *priests and magistrates*. They were divided into three classes:[7] the bard proper, whose province was philosophy and poetry; the Druid, or minister of religion; and the ovate, or mechanic and artist. These classes were all obedient to one superior—the Archdruid.

The etymology of the word *Druid* has long been a subject of dispute, many deriving it from the Greek word [Greek: drus], an oak, because it has been affirmed that their mysteries were carried on in oak groves and forests; but as the latter fact is doubtful, consequently the etymology founded upon it is shaken. It has been already stated that the Druids were magistrates and philosophers, and very few etymologists will cavil with me if we fix it at once upon the Celtic word *druidh*, signifying "*a wise man*."

The theological tenets of the Druids were of a most interesting character—professing future punishments and immortality. Their heaven partook of the nature of the Elysian Fields, while their hell[8] was as horrible as the most violent fanatic could depict it. It was a gulph of darkness, where the baneful animal crept, where the cold, gliding serpent maddened the sinner with his envenomed tooth, and hissed the dirge of horror, while the lion prowled along with his noiseless paw, and hungry wolves devoured those whom for their crimes on earth the Druids (unable to conquer or correct) condemned to

"Those dark solitudes and awful cells."

No sacred ceremonies could be performed but in the Druid's presence: they were the guardians of religion, the interpreters of mysteries; and the foolish "*cunning man*" of the north, who is often consulted in these days relative to strayed cattle, intended matches, &c. is a relic of the *"druidh," the wise man* of the ancient Celts.

Sun worship was the original creed; but as abuses crept in, other gods were variously introduced at the altars, Mercury being the most noted. The Druids were astronomers, and they divided time, not

[7] Vide Introduction to Owen's Translations of the Elegies of Llywarch Hen.

[8] Gaelic Antiquities, p. 21.

by the days but nights;[9] a custom as old as any with which we are acquainted, as it appears Genesis i.5: "And the *evening* and the morning were the first day." Whence we say, to this day, a "se'en *night*"—a "fort *night*."

As the sun was the object of adoration, no wonder that mysteries were also performed to the moon, riding in silver splendour through azure space; smiling from her height upon the departed and unseen luminaries which had sunk over the distant hill, the fearful mind would watch the lamp of night as a guardian world, or deity, and in the fervour of gratitude, or under the impulse of fear, would address her as the mediatrix between man and his deity.

The chief times of devotion were at the summer solstice and the winter solstice, (whence the YULE clog), mid-day, or midnight—a zenith being their period. The new and full moon was duly reverenced. On the sixth day, a high officiating Druid gathered mistletoe; a ceremony conducted with great solemnity. It was cut with a golden knife, caught in a white robe, and not allowed to touch the ground. The shadow of this Druidical rite exists in the peculiar privileges of kissing under the mistletoe at Christmas times.

Lustrations were used, sacrifices were made, and the altar reeked, some say with human gore. The victim being dead, prayers succeeded; the entrails were examined, and certain portions were consumed upon the fire altar:

"Crepitant preces, altaria fumant."

Intemperate drinking generally closed the sacrifice, and a fresh strewing of oak leaves reconsecrated the altar. It is remarkable that drinking—hard drinking—should have been practised by the priesthood in those remote periods, but as they were pagan heathens any animadversions can be made in safety. I cannot digress upon it. White bulls were sacrificed, and it is a singular coincidence (too striking to be the effect of chance) that white bulls were sacrificed by the Egyptians to Apis.[10]

The Druids inculcated an utter disregard of death, themselves showing a good example, being ever foremost in the battle strife, urging on their countrymen to deeds of valour; not doling out their maxims in slothful indolence, and acting the reverse of their doctrine:

Certe populi qui despicit arctos
Felices errore suo, quos ille timorum
Maxumus, haud urget Lethi metus: inde ruendi
In ferrum mens prona viris, animae capaces
Mortis, et ignavum rediturae parcere vitae.

Lucan. Phars. L. i.

Thrice happy they beneath their northern skies
Who that worst fear—the fear of death—despise—
Hence they no cares for this frail being feel,
But rush undaunted on the pointed steel;
Provoke approaching fate, and bravely scorn
To spare that life which must so soon return.

The Druids were wont to teach in small cells, but lived in large buildings and fared sumptuously. Some of the cells are remaining to this day, as at Ty Iltud, in Brecknockshire.

[9] Vide Richard of Cirencester.

[10] Herodotus describes the subject more minutely.

From these observations it is apparent that a portion of men extraordinary in their vast power over the human mind, and possessed of superior knowledge, were here before Caesar's arrival, and that our ancestors were not such barbarians as the proud Roman would lead us to consider them.[11]

SELIM.

[11] See also "the Druids and their Times," from the German of Wieland, p. 20 of the present volume.

CURIOUS CUSTOM RELATING TO INHERITANCE

Salmon, in his *History of Hertfordshire*, imagines that the East Saxon and Mercian kingdoms were, in the upper part of this county, separated from each other by the Ermin-street; and in the lower part, in the parish of Cheshunt, by a bank, which anciently reached from Middlesex through Theobald's Park, across Goffe's Lane, to Thunderfield Grove, over Beaumont Green, to Nineacres Wood. There is a custom in the manor of Cheshunt, he says, "by which the elder brother inherits above the bank, and the youngest below it, in the same fields;—which could not have been introduced but from the different laws of a different government."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.