

VARIOUS

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THE LOWTHER ARCADE



In No. 514 of *The Mirror* we explained the situation of the Lowther Arcade. We may here observe that this covered way or arcade intersects the insulated triangle of buildings lately completed in the Strand, the principal façade of which is designated *West Strand*.

The Engraving represents the interior of the Arcade, similar in its use to the Burlington Arcade, and, although wider and more lofty, including three stories in height, it is not so long. The passage

forms an acute angle with the Strand, running to the back of St. Martin's Church, and is divided by large pilasters into a succession of compartments; the pilasters are joined by an arch; and the compartments are domed over, and lighted in the centre by large domical lights, which illuminate the whole passage in a perfect manner. "All the shop-fronts are decorated in a similar manner, and the whole has been designed and executed with great care by the builder, Mr. Herbert. The shops on the exterior are designed to have the appearance of one great whole. The style of architecture is Grecian, and the order employed Corinthian: the angles are finished in a novel manner, with double circular buildings, having the roof domed in brick, with an ornament as a finish to the top of the dome. The effect of the whole would be agreeable if it had the appearance of a solid basement to stand upon; but as tradesmen find it necessary to have as much open space as possible to exhibit their goods, the mass of architecture above must appear to be supported by the window-frames of the shops, although in reality they are based upon small iron columns of four and six inches diameter, which are scarcely seen, and which offer the slightest possible impediment to the exhibition of goods."

We may add that the Arcade at night is lit with gas within elegant vase-shaped shades of ground glass, branching from each side. The ornaments of the domes, especially that of the Caduceus, are introduced with good effect.

We take the introduction of this and similar passages in the British metropolis to have been originally from the French capital. Thus, in Paris are the *Passage des Panoramas*; the *Passage Delorme*; the *Passage d'Artois*; the *Passage Feydeau*; the *Passage de Caire*; and the *Passage Montesquieu*. A more grandiloquent name applied by the French to some of their passages is *galerie*: we remember the *Galerie Vivienne* as one of the most splendid specimens, with its *marchands* of artificial luxuries. The *Galerie Vero Dodat*, (we think shorter than the Lowther Arcade,) is in the extreme of shop-front magnificence: the floor is of alternate squares of black and white marble, and the fronts are of plate-glass with highly-polished brass frames, and we doubt whether that common material, wood, is to be seen in the doors. This *Galerie* is named after its proprietor, M. Vero Dodat, an opulent *charcutier*, (a pork-butcher) in the neighbouring street; but we are unable to inform the reader by how many horse power his sausage-chopping machine is worked.

VIRGINIA WATER

(To the Editor.)

In No. 533 of *The Mirror* is a Cut of the *Cascade* at Virginia Water (which by the way is a very correct one, with the keeper's lodge in the distance) which you state was the late King's own planing; but such was not the case, as it was built in the reign of George the Third; the late king merely added improvements about it, one of which was the building of a rude bridge a little below the cascade, of stones similar to the fall: this bridge connects a favourite drive down to the nursery.

Brighton.

E.E.

FISHING IN CANADA

(To the Editor.)

It may be entertaining to many of your readers now that emigration occupies the thoughts of so many, to sketch a short account of the method chiefly employed in Canada, in capturing fish, which to very many settlers is an important adjunct to their domestic economy. Those living on the borders of the numerous lakes and rivers of Canada, which are invariably stored with fine fish, are provided with either a light boat, log, or what is by far the best, a bark canoe; a barbed fishing spear, with light tapering shaft, about twelve or sixteen feet long, and an iron basket for holding pine knots, and capable of being suspended at the head of the boat when fired. In the calm evenings after dusk, many of these lights are seen stealing out from the woody bays in the lakes, towards the best fishing grounds, and two or three canoes together, with the reflection of the red light from the clear green water on the bronzed faces of either the native Indian, or the almost as wild Backwoodsman, compose an extraordinary scene: the silence of the night is undisturbed, save by the gurgling noise of the paddles, as guided by the point of the spear; the canoe whirls on its axis with an almost dizzying velocity, or the sudden dash of the spear, followed by the struggles of the transfixed fish, or perhaps the characteristic "Eh," from the Indian steersman. In this manner, sometimes fifty or sixty fish of three or four pounds are speared in the course of a night, consisting of black bass, white fish, and sometimes a noble maskimongi. A little practice soon enables the young settler to take an active part in this pursuit. The light seems to attract the fish, as round it they thickly congregate. But few fish are caught in this country by the fly: at some seasons, however, the black bass will rise to it. A CANADIAN.

THE ARBALEST, OR CROSS-BOW

(To the Editor.)

No. 538, of *The Mirror*, contains a very interesting memoir on the subject of the Cross-bow, but I do not find that the mode of bending the steel bow has been described; which from its great strength it is evident could not be accomplished without the assistance of some mechanical power. This in the more modern bows is attained by the application of a piece of steel, which lies along the front of the stem, and is moved forward on a pivot until the string is caught by a hook, and a lever is thus obtained, by means of which the bow is drawn to its proper extent. It seems to me that this is the description of bow of which your correspondent has furnished a drawing. Another mode, and which appears to have been applied to the ancient bows, was by a sort of two-handed windlass, with ropes and pulleys, called a "*moulinet*," which was temporarily attached to the butt-end of the Cross-bow; of this a drawing is given in the illustrations of Froissart's *Chronicles*, particularly in that one descriptive of the Siege of Aubenton; in which two bowmen are shown, one in the act of winding up the bow, and the other taking his aim, the *moulinet*, &c. lying at his feet. Of this latter description, there are two specimens preserved in the Tower of London, both of about the period of our Henry the Sixth.

C.P.C.

LINES TO A LARK

(For the Mirror.)

Upon thy happy flight to heaven, again, sweet
bird, thou art;
The morning beam is on thy wings, its influence
in thy heart;
Like matin hymns blest spirits sing in yonder
happy sky,
Break on the ear, the small, sweet notes of thy
wild melody.

Cold winter winds are far away, the cruel snows
have past;
And spring's sweet skies, and blushing flowers
shine o'er the world at last;
Where the young corn springs fresh, and green,
sweet flowerets gather'd he,
And form around thy lowly nest a shelter sweet
for thee.

Is it not this which wakes thy song, with thoughts of
summer hours,
When warmer hues shall clothe the skies, and
darker shades the bowers;
Has nature to thy throbbing heart such glowing
feelings given,
That thou canst feel the beautiful, of this bright
earth and heaven.

If so, how blest must be thy lot, from azure
skies to gaze,
When the fresh morn is in the heavens, or
mid-day splendours blaze;
Or when the sunset's canopy of golden light is
spread,
And thou unseen, enshrin'd in light, art singing
overhead.

Oh then thy happy song comes down upon the
glowing breast,
Soft as rich sunlight, on the flowers, comes from
the golden west:
And fain the heart would soar with thee, enshrin'd
in thought as sweet,

As the rich tones, which from thy heart, thou
dost in song repeat.

Oh there is not on earth a breast, but turns
with joy to thee.
From the cold wither'd years of age, to smiling
infancy.
Thou claimest smiles from ev'ry lip, and praise
from ev'ry tongue;
Such sympathy each happy heart finds in thy
joyous song.

Dorking.
SYLVA.

THE COSMOPOLITE

SUPERSTITIONS, FABLES, &C. RELATIVE TO ANIMALS

(Continued from page 180.)

The following curious notice of the *Acherontia Atropos*, or Death's-head Moth, we extract from "The Journal of a Naturalist:"—"The yellow and brown-tailed moths," he observes, "the death-watch, our snails, and many other insects, have all been the subjects of man's fears, but the dread excited in England by the appearance, noises, or increase of insects, are petty apprehensions compared with the horror that the presence of this *Acherontia* occasions to some of the more fanciful and superstitious natives of northern Europe, maintainers of the wildest conceptions. A letter is now before me from a correspondent in German Poland, where this insect is a common creature, and so abounded in 1824 that my informant collected fifty of them in a potato field of his village, where they call them the 'death's-head phantom,' the 'wandering death-bird,' &c. The markings on the back represent to their fertile imaginations the head of a perfect skeleton, with the limb bones crossed beneath; its cry becomes the voice of anguish, the moaning of a child, the signal of grief; it is regarded, not as the creation of a benevolent being, but as the device of evil spirits—spirits, enemies to man, conceived and fabricated in the dark; and the very shining of its eyes is supposed to represent the fiery element whence it is thought to have proceeded. Flying into their apartments in an evening, it at times extinguishes the light, foretelling war, pestilence, famine, and death to man and beast. * * * This insect has been thought to be peculiarly gifted in having a voice and squeaking like a mouse when handled or disturbed; but, in truth, no insect that we know of has the requisite organs to produce a genuine voice; they emit sounds by other means, probably all external."

The Icelanders believe *Seals* to be the offspring of Pharaoh and his host; who, they assert, were changed into these animals when overwhelmed in the Red Sea. The *Grampus*, *Porpoise*, and *Dolphin*, have each from the earliest ages been the subject of numerous superstitions and fables, particularly the latter, which was believed to have a great attachment to the human race, and to succour them in accidents by sea; it is a perfectly straight fish, yet even painters have promulgated a falsity respecting it, by representing it from the curved form in which it appears above water, bent like the letter S reversed. "The inhabitants of Pesquare," says Dr. Belon, "and of the borders of Lake Gourd are firmly persuaded that the *Carp* of those lakes are nourished with pure gold; and a great portion of the people in the Lyonnois are fully satisfied that the fish called *humble* and *ernblons* eat no other food than gold. There is not a peasant in the environs of the Lake of Bourgil who will not maintain that the *Laurets*, a fish sold daily in Lyons, feed on pure gold alone. The same is the belief of the people of the Lake Paladron in Savoy, and of those near Lodi. But," adds the Doctor, "having carefully examined the stomachs of these several fishes, I have found that they lived on other substances, and that from the anatomy of the stomach it is impossible that they should be able to digest gold." This fable, therefore, with that of the *Chameleon* living on air only, and some others which we shall have occasion to mention, may be regarded amongst those exploded by science.

The fable of the *Kraken* has been referred to imperfect and exaggerated accounts of monstrous *Polypi* infesting the northern seas; how far may not the *Cuttle-fish* have given rise to this fiction? In hot countries (our readers will remember that in a late paper, *Mirror*, vol. xvii. pp. 282-299, we directed their attention to the similarity of superstitions in every country of the world, hence inferring a common, and most probably oriental origin for all)—in hot countries cuttle-fish are found of gigantic

dimensions; the Indians affirm that some have been seen two fathoms broad over their centre; and each arm (for this kind is the eight-armed cuttle-fish) nine fathoms long!!! Lest these animals should fling their arms over the Indians' light canoes, and draw them and their owners into the sea, they fail not to be provided with an axe to chop them off.

The ancients believed that the oil of the *Grayling* obliterated freckles and small-pox marks. The adhesive qualities of the *Remora*, or *Sucking-fish*, and its habit of darting against and fixing itself to the side of a vessel, caused the ancients to believe that the possessors of it had the power of arresting the progress of a ship in full sail.

Some Catholics, in consequence of the *John Doree* having a dark spot, like a finger-mark, on each side of the head, believe this to have been the fish, and not the *Haddock*, from which the Apostle Peter took the tribute-money, by order of our Saviour. The modern Greeks denominate it "the fish of St. Christopher," from a legend which relates that it was trodden on by that saint, when he bore his divine burden across an arm of the sea. Some species of *Echini*, fossilized, and seen frequently in Norfolk, are termed by the ignorant peasantry, and considered, *Fairy Loaves*, to take which, when found, is highly unlucky.

The *Amphisbaena*, from its faculty of moving backwards or forwards at pleasure, has been thought to have a head at either extremity of its reptile body, but close inspection proves this opinion false. The fascinating power of the *Rattlesnake*, of which so many stories have in times past been related, and which was asserted to exist in its glittering eyes, has been of late years resolved into that extreme nervous terror of its victim (at sight of so certain a foe) which deprives it of the power of motion, and causes it to fall, an unresisting prey, into the reptile's jaws. We may here pause to observe, *en passant*, that the antipathy which people of all ages and nations have felt against every reptile of the serpent tribe, from the harmless worm to the hosts of deadly "dragons" which infest the torrid zone, and the popular opinion that all are venomous, often in spite of experience, seems to be not so much superstition, as a terror of the species, implanted, since the fall, in our bosoms, by the same Divine Being who at that period pronounced the serpent to be the most accursed beast of the field.

(To be continued.)

SPIRIT OF THE PUBLIC JOURNALS

TAIT'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE

Nothing if not political appears to be the order of the new magazine and other literary enterprises of the present day. Is this good policy in itself? it may be so from the vivifying aid it lends to the springs of imaginative writing. We have therefore no right to complain of the *leaven* of Mr. Tait's Magazine: it is anything but dull: *e.g.* the life and jauntiness of the following paper is very pleasant, shrewd, and clever:

The Martinet.

The "Martinet" is the name of a genus, not of a species; the title of a race variously feathered, but having specific qualities in common. There is your military martinet, your clerical martinet, your legal martinet, and the martinet of common life, ("*Galllicrista fastidiosa communis*," Linnaeus would class him,) who is to the others what the house-sparrow is to the rest of his tribe. It is with him alone we have to do. The "martinet" is a person who is all his life violently busied in endeavouring to be a perfect gentleman, and who *almost* succeeds. He misses the point by over-stepping it. He is like one of those greyhounds which outrun the hare fleetly enough, but cannot "*take*" her when they have done so. They have a little too much speed, and a little too little tact. The martinet is always bent upon thinking, saying, doing, and having, every thing after a nicer fashion than other people, until his nicety runs into downright mannerism; all his ideas become "clipped taffeta," and all his eggs are known to have "two yolks." He rarely comes of age or is thoroughly ripe till near forty, before which he may be a little of the precise fop, and after which he changes to the somewhat foppish precisian, which is the best definition of him. He would be an excellent member of society were he not a little too nice for its every-day work, which, to speak a truth in metaphor, will not always admit of white gloves. He is remarkably consistent in all his proceedings, however, and the outward man is a perfect and complete type of the inward, and *vice versa*

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