THE TOWN, by LEIGH HUNT.* HANDBOOK FOR LONDON, by PETER CUNNINGHAM.†

Here are two remarkable works, that not only deserve but demand notice, encouragement and reward. Both treat of one matter, yet the mode of handling is as opposite as the poles. Mr. Cunningham gives us the framework of his ... the anatomy, the bones; Mr. Hunt supp... the flesh, the muscle, the complexion—in a w...d, the breathing form. The titles of the books are ...ently characteristic of their respective conten... We can conceive no companion more welcom... t... an enlightened foreigner visiting this met... than Mr. Cunningham, with his laborious rese...ed, his ...pulous exactness, his alphabetical arrangement, ... his authorities from every imaginable source. Upon the other hand, we will allow no higher enjoyment for a rational Englishman than to stroll leisurely through this marvellous town arm ...m with Mr. Hunt. As a piece of severe, com... and finished structure, the "Handbook" is no... to be surpassed; but for a specimen of exqui... mos... recommend us to the "Town." The ...nct...on which we would draw betw...n thes... ...ks Mr. Cunningham himself ... in the ... first lines of his preface:—

"This work on Lo... say ... now offer to the public with some distr... been seven ...ars in hand; it has not only engrosse... ...re, and cost me mu... thought and anxiety ... ...d upon me a very ... ful amount of minute ... among unexamined p... often difficult of access, ... never very cl... or legible ... the chance of opening ... new sou...es of ...elligence."

We can easily beli... it; eve... ...ge of the book in... ...he trouble and com... ...ates the perseverance; but pre...ly, what ...r. Cunningham's undertaking has been to him, t... other undertaking has *not* be... to Mr. Hunt. ...uthor of the "To..." we take upon us to say, has made no such apprenticesh...p of his leisure as ... here indicated; ... suffered no wear and tear of intellect and spirit in the gathering of his rich materials; has never enjoyed the painful satisfaction of hoarding up the small contributions wrung from dull vestrymen and their duller records. The charm of Mr. Leigh Hunt's book is, that not an hour's drudgery is disclosed from beginning to end. What he gives us are the outpou... ... mind enriched with the most agreeable knowledg... ...me ...ed up as he has strolled in love and ...ppy idl...ss along the golden shores of literature. In w... ...ing through London fresh from his b... no... ...t Mr. Hunt was amazed to find ... ...uch ... ...e he knew of streets and sites ... ...n was pr...nted to the eye. Beyond the ...ession of s... knowledge there is but on... greater delight—to communicate it freely.

For author ...r for reader there are few occupations more satis...tory than the contemplation of the manners and customs, the trans... ...s and the actors, of the past. The best feelin... ...f man alone ...e engaged in dwelling ... ... varied move...ents, good and e..., ...f the human breast, of which there survives for us simply the transmitted record. As ...e think kindly of the departed foe, so we reflect tenderly over the buried past, however discordant its element... may have been with those which constitute ... living present. ...t is astonishing how much bigotry in those who have preceded us will be tolerated by those who are merciless against even ...ication of intolerance on the part ... their contemporaries. In this consists the fascin...tion o... v...umes lik... those before us. Time has ...ssipate... ...ssion which agitated the gener...tions ...wn ... great, and lef... behind it a ... ...re, upon wh... men of every cre... sit... ... side by sid... may g...e until the... a... ...sities and grow ashamed of lo... ...ings. Mr. Leigh Hunt is no excep...

...ule. He is a ...me, ... up ... age after age ... ... it reassume its ... ...nal ... ...ture ... ...ne would have been a ...on had he moved amongst the men whose ...s be...ile his fancy. It is difficult to repress a ...e as here and there we light upon a reverent at...pt to excuse in our unscrupulous progenitors the ...ults which, if performed to-day, would be denounced, without mercy, by the same well-meaning and ingenuous pen. Mayday was a glorious holyday for the people in the time of the Cavaliers. Puritanism, as we all know, put an end to it. What Mr. Hunt and his friends would have said to the la... Sir Andrew Agnew, or to any other gent...ems ... ...mpting, no doubt upon highly conscie... ...io... ...urtail the pleasures of the work... ...ch... ... ...m a tolerably shrewd guess. ... n... ... this very agreeable wri... ...n he ...in draw good from evil, and ... ...ine betwee... Peters, dead, gone, and p...ically ...nonized living member of our own p...osaic P... ...ent. acknowledged that the civil wars pl... ...avoc the healthy and harmless ...musement... ...e p... lation; but we are warned that "w... ...ed many advantages by the th...ghtfulness ... ...te those times to quarrel with their mistakes; and must have no doubt that the progress of knowle... to which they gave an impulse will brin... back advantages they omitted by the wa... ... i... said, Mr. Hunt, and we will *not* d... least, whilst you challenge considerati... ...d, let us all learn moderation to...ds ...

Justic... to Mr. Hunt's ... ... be rendered by a passing notice of its co... ...nts. ... consists of upwards of 600 pages, and of th... whole ...mber there is not one which does not glow ...th ... and will not bear transcribing. The production itself is a series of dissolving views, all pictures from the life, and representing scenes in which every inhabitant of the metropolis has an interest far great...r than he suspects till he is taught it. Wordswo...h, in one of his simplest and most touching ...ms, speaks of the effect produced upon a count... girl by the notes of a thrush chirping from its ca... at the corner of Wood-street, Cheapside. In ... ...stant the girl is transported to the home of her childhood, and reassumes her early ... innocence. Something analogous to the feeli... conveyed to the companion of Mr. Hunt, whe... ...tter, by a touch, fills Whitehall with ... ...ndour of the days of Wolsey, or transforms the ... ...and into a pleasant way between the city and W...tminster, with no meaner habitations than the inns of Bishops, who "ventured to live by the water side, because they were held sacred per...ns whom nobody would hurt." The spirit of the looker-on is with London in it... infancy, and is am...ed and instructed by all the novelty revealed. Let us travel with Mr. Leigh Hunt through a well-known street or two, and say whether it be so or not. A minute or two takes us to St. Paul's.

Mr. Cunningham, with that admir...ble particularity for which his "Handb..." ...remarkabl... ... ca...ful to acquaint th... ignorant on such points ... th... cost of admissio... to our great ca...hedral ... as ...ows:—

	s.	d.
To v... the monum...ts ... body of the ...	0	2
Whis...ing galler... ...d tw... ...side galler... ...	0	6
Ba...	1	6
Library, ...bell, geometrical staircase, and model room	1	0
Clock	0	2
Crypt and Nelson's monume... ...	1	0
Total		4"

The ...informed reader, naturally ... shocked at such a bill of char... ...or such a place, thinks at once ... ...is pi... and wonders what wo... ... ... th... ness the profanity and note th... verger po... pence? Mr. Leigh Hunt enables us to gu... St. Paul's," says that gentleman, "throug... the whole period of its existence, at lea...

reign of Henry III., was a thoroughfare and a 'den of thieves.' In the reign of Edward III. the King complains to the Bishop that 'the eating room of the Canons had become the office and work place of artisans and the resort of shameless women.'" In the reign of Queen Mary the Common Council passed an act subjecting all offenders to divers pains and penalties; for not only by this time were beef, bread, fish, flesh, and porters' loads sacrilegiously carried through the church, but mules, horses, and other cattle availed themselves equally of the same short cut. How effectual the statute in question proved may be gathered from the fact that in the reign of Elizabeth "Idlers and drunkards were indulged in lying and sleeping at the choir door, whilst other usages, too nauseous for description, were also frequent." "The middle of St. Paul's," continues Mr. Hunt, "was the Bond-street of this period, and remained so till the time of the Commonwealth. The loungers were called Paul's walkers." Bacon, in his youth, was such a buck. "To complete these urbanities the church was the resort of pickpockets. Bishop Corbet, a poetical wit of the time of Charles I., sums up its character as the

"walke
"'Where all our Brittaine sinners sweare and talk.'

Only one reformation had taken place in it since the complaint made by Edward III.: no woman was to be found there, at least not of the crowd. The practice of 'walking and talking' in St. Paul's appears to have revived under James II., probably in connexion with Catholic wishes; for there was an act of the 1st of William and Mary, by which transgressors forfeited 20*l.* for every offence; and, what is remarkable, the bishop threatened to enforce this act so late as the year 1725; 'the custom,' says Mr. Malcolm, 'had become so very prevalent.'"

Such are the changes wrought by time. A hundred years ago the dignitaries of St. Paul's threatened the public with a penal act because the latter fail in respect to the sanctity of the cathedral. To-day the same public visit the dignitaries with their pious indignation because the latter degrade the holy institution committed to their keeping to the level of a theatre, a show-house, and a twopenny exhibition. "Dining with Duke Humphrey" is a familiar proverb. Not so familiar, perhaps, is its origin. "The proverb," Mr. Hunt tells us,

"Has survived to the present day, owing to a supposed tomb of Humphrey, the good Duke of Gloucester, which was popular with the poorer frequenters of the place. They had a custom of strewing herbs before it, sprinkling it with water. The tomb, according to Stow, was not Humphrey's, but that of Sir John Beauchamp, one of the House of Warwick. Men who strolled about for want of a dinner were familiar enough with this tomb, and were therefore said to dine with Duke Humphrey."

We have scarcely space sufficient to give a glimpse here and there of the scenes evoked by the pen of Mr. Hunt. For a full view the reader must refer to the volumes themselves. He will not regret the trouble. Before we leave St. Paul's, however, it is worth while to glance at the preaching going on there during the reign of the Tudors.

"In that reign," writes Mr. Hunt, "Paul's cross was the scene of a very remarkable series of contradictions. The Government, under Henry VIII., preached for and against the same doctrines in religion. Mary seriously attempted to revive them, and they were finally denounced by Elizabeth. Wolsey began in 1521 with fulminating, by command of the Pope, against 'one Martin Eleutherius' (Luther). The denouncement was made by Fisher (afterwards beheaded for denying the King's supremacy), but Wolsey sat by, in his usual state, censed and canopied with the Pope's ambassador on one side of him, and the Emperor's on the other. During the sermon a collection of Luther's books was burnt in the churchyard, 'which ended my Lord Cardinal went home to dinner with all the other prelates.' About 10 years afterwards the preachers at Paul's cross received an order from the King 'to teach and declare to the people that neither the Pope nor any of his predecessors, were anything more than the temple Bishops of Rome.' On the accession of Mary the discourses were ordered to veer directly round, which produced two attempts to assassinate the preachers in sermon time; and the moment Elizabeth came to the throne the divines began recommending the very opposite tenets, and the Pope was finally rejected.

At this time Elizabeth afterwards attended there a thanksgiving sermon for the defeat of the Invincible Armada; on which occasion a coach was first seen in England—the one she came in. The last sermon attended there by the Sovereign was during the reign of her successor; but discourses continued to be delivered up to the time of the civil wars, when, after being turned to account by the Puritans for about a year, the pulpit was demolished by order of Parliament."

What a lesson in a score of lines! Take it to heart, Orangemen and Ribandmen, Exeter-hall and St. Jarlath's, the Rev. Dr. O'Sullivan and the Rev. Dr. M'Hale! Remember upon what slender threads the truth has hung of old, and seek to establish it by ceasing to war like furies, and beginning to commune like reasonable men, abhorrent of error and needful of much mutual forbearance. What a mockery of Christianity is this exhibited by our forefathers in God's name at St. Paul's cross! What think we that candid posterity will think and say of us? Men have not thought, it may be, of the matter. It is time to do so.

We might linger for hours about St. Paul's, but we are called to Fleet-street, where, in Bolt-court, no smaller a personage than Doctor Johnson himself awaits us. How the Doctor loved Fleet-street, selecting his residences for the greater part of his life in snug nooks leading out of it, which afforded him all the quietness he needed for intellectual purposes, and enabled him as it were with a bound to meet the tide of humanity, along which it was his intense delight to be borne. Fetter-lane, Boswell-court, Gough-square, Inner Temple-lane, Johnson's-court, and Bolt-court—such are the names of the Doctor's places of abode. He would have pined at Brompton and Putney; he was in Elysium in sight of his coffee-house, and jostling with the crowd.

We have been much too apt to associate the notion of overbearing tyranny with the name and character of the great lexicographer. It was a capital joke of one of the Doctor's contemporaries to assert the great man's claims to a pension as soon as Doctor Shebbeare had secured his grant. "What had been given to the she-bear," it was said, "could hardly be denied to the he-bear." Another of Johnson's contemporaries was nearer the mark, when he declared that the man had nothing of the bear but his skin. "In truth, the gentle heart throbbed beneath the rugged, uncouth mass." A thousand instances make known the fact. There is nothing more graceful in Mr. Leigh Hunt's book than his vindication of this literary chieftain, with whose views in many respects the republican spirit of Mr. Hunt refuses to sympathise.

"As to Johnson's pompous manner," says our author, "the most excusable part of it originated, doubtless, in his having decided opinions; the rest may have been an instinct of self-defence, arising from his ungainly figure, not without a sense of the dignity of his calling. He certainly lost nothing by it on the whole. At all events, one is willing to think the best of what was accompanied by so much excellence. Affectation it was not; for nobody despised pretension of any kind more than he did. Johnson was a sort of born bishop in his way, with high judgments and cathedral notions lording it in his mind, and *ex cathedrâ* he accordingly spoke."

Boswell tells us that at his very first interview with his idol at the house of Davies the bookseller, "He was satisfied that though there was a roughness in his manner there was no ill-nature in his disposition." Ill-nature, indeed! Why was it not in this very Fleet-street that he took up a poor forlorn girl in his burly arm, put her to bed in his own house, and restored her to health and her friends, "an action sufficient," as Mr. Hunt justly affirms, "to redeem a million of the asperities of temper occasioned by disease and to stamp him, in spite of his bigotry, a good Christian?" Was it not in Fleet-street that beggars stood, intercepting the good man's way between his house and the tavern at which he dined, knowing well enough that to the last sixpence they would receive the silver in his pocket?

Whilst he was living in Gough-square he wrote part of his dictionary; he was very poor at the time; but, if we are to believe his servant, "Although he had little for himself, he frequently sent money to Mr. Shiel's when in distress;" Mr. Shiel being one of the helpers in the dictionary. Illwill could not possibly exist in the bosom of the man who nursed, according to Mrs. Thrale, "whole nests of people in his house, where the lame, the blind, the sick, and the sorrowful found a sure retreat from all the evils whence his little income could secure them." It was the habit of the Doctor, during his intimacy with the Thrales, to spend the middle of the week with his friends at Streatham, keeping his *protégés* upon a settled allowance in Fleet-street.

"Every Saturday," says Mrs. Thrale, "he would return to his numerous family, giving them three good dinners and his company before he came back to us on the Monday night, and treating them with the same or, perhaps, more ceremonious civility than he would have done by as many people of fashion; making the Holy Scripture thus the rule of his conduct, and only expecting salvation as he was able to obey its precepts."

It was a theory of the Doctor's, that a man who could not make himself happy in a tavern could be happy nowhere. His reasoning was unanswerable. In a private house, he contended, let the folks be as friendly as they please, there must always be some care and anxiety; at a tavern there is none.

"You are sure you are welcome; and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do, who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward in proportion as they please."

Dr. Johnson accordingly knew every tavern and coffee-house in Fleet-street. One is named after him, but it was probably his experience at the Mitre, which he chiefly visited, that induced him to pronounce "a tavern chair the throne of human felicity." It was at the Mitre that Boswell first passed a tavern night with his hero. "We had a good supper," says Bozzy, "and port-wine, of which he then sometimes drank a bottle." They sat till between 1 and 2 in the morning. He told Boswell that "he generally went abroad at about 4 in the afternoon, and seldom came home till 2 in the morning. I took the liberty to ask if he did not think it wrong to live thus, and not to make more use of his great talents? He owned it was a bad habit."

What use Johnson did make of his talents, however, has never been more happily described than by Mr. Hunt in his present work. "He advanced," says our author,

"By the power of his conversation, the strictness of his veracity, and be respect he exacted towards his presence, what may be called the personal dignity of literature. The consequence has been not exactly what he expected, but certainly what the great interests of knowledge require, and Johnson has assisted men with whom he little thought of co-operating, in setting the claims of truth and beneficence above all others."

To do even as much as this were worth living for.

Where Farringdon-street now stands, at the bottom of Ludgate-hill, the River Fleet formerly ran, and was navigable.

"In Fleet-market is Seacoal-lane, so called from the barges that landed coal there; and Turnagain lane, at the bottom of which the unadvised passenger found himself by the water compelled to retrace his steps."

A hundred years ago the channel was partially built over, but a fetid ditch (of which more anon) at that time ran from Fleet-market, and emptied itself into the river. In the market, and before the Fleet-prison, which has been removed within the memory of our youngest reader, there was an exhibition at the time we speak of, perhaps unrivalled in the metropolis at that or any other time; viz., a *touting* establishment for unemployed clergymen. Passengers were invited to walk into the prison in order to be married, just as travellers at Ramsgate or Dover are invited to follow the inviter to the Blue Dragon or the Cat and Gridiron. The passengers entered, the ceremony was performed, and the whole party retired to a neighbouring gin shop in order to behave handsomely by the rev. gentleman. A sign board was on the wall near the prison representing a man and woman with joined hands, and bearing the inscription, "*Marriages performed here.*" The touters were of the lowest order, the parson, as may be supposed, not of the highest. He is described by one who complains of having been often molested on his road with, "Will you please, Sir, to walk in and be married?" as "a squalid, profligate figure, clad in a tattered plaid nightgown, with a fiery face, and ready to couple you for a dram of gin or roll of tobacco." It was stated on evidence that between the 19th day of October, 1704, and the 12th of February, 1705, 2,954 marriages were celebrated after this fashion in the Fleet-prison, besides others of which no register remained. "The neighbourhood," our present chronicler states, "at length complained, and the abuse was put an end to by the Marriage Act, to which it gave rise."

Mr. Peter Cunningham is full of interesting matter with respect to this locality, concise and condensed as is his custom. From him we learn that of the eminent persons confined at various times in the Fleet-prison, are to be noted Lord Surrey, the poet, who described his gaol as "a noisome place, with a pestilent atmosphere;" Bishop Hooker, the martyr; Dr. Donne, for marrying Sir George More's daughter without her father's knowledge; Lord Viscount Falkland, "for sending a challenge;" William Prynne, for writing his *Histriomastix;* Wycherley, the poet; and Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania. Of the great folks who married here are to be reckoned the son of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Churchill, the poet.

The Fleet-ditch in former days furnished a subject for poetical remonstrance, as it supplies even at the moment of our writing matter for very indignant prose. "At a time"—writes a correspondent as recently as the 2d of the present month—

"When deadly sickness is attacking the lives of numbers in this metropolis, I offer no apology for endeavouring to direct attention to the exposed condition of the Fleet-ditch, in the neighbourhood of Saffron hill. I am certain that many of your readers will scarcely credit that at the present time, this gigantic sewer is permitted to pursue its poisonous course for some distance (uncovered) through one of the most dense populations in London."

We are certain that many of our readers will be very much surprised to learn, that there is a Fleet-ditch at all. Vile as is the nastiness which flows underground in the neighbourhood referred to on its wholesome and purifying march to the Thames, the good citizen knows nothing of the sickening misery to which his forefathers were liable from the existence of the same nuisance under much more disgusting circumstances. "Fleet-ditch," says Mr. Cunningham,

"Was that part of the town-ditch in front of the city-wall between Bridewell-dock and Holborn, so called from the Fleet, a bourne or brook which runs into the town-ditch, by, I believe, Fleet-lane, and so by Bridewell, into the Thames at Blackfriars-bridge."

After the great fire the ditch was converted into a creek, and called "the New Canal." In good time the creek became stagnant, and received every description of garbage and offal. All attempts to clean it out were ineffectual. Boats and barges had formerly unloaded their cargoes at Holborn; now, according to Ben Jonson, the

"————— hair of measled hogs,
"The heads, boughs, entrails, and the hides of dogs"

stopped the way. It was not until the time of Cromwell, whose practical good sense seems to have communicated itself to his subjects in more than one direction, that an order was issued for the cleansing of the sewer, and for removing all the obstructions that made it noisome and intolerable to the people. Till the time of the great fire, however, the nuisance continued, though in an abated form. After that event the ditch was deepened between Holborn and

the Thames, and barges once more found an unimpeded way to the former place. The "New Canal" was a grand affair after its kind. Its sides were built of stone and brick; wooden railings protected it, and wharves and landing places gave a business-like air to its otherwise improved appearance. Moreover the speculation cost 27,777*l.*, besides the money given for the ground upon which the wharves were built. The concern, nevertheless, was a failure; the toll was high, the traffic small, and the "New Canal" quickly degenerated again into the foulest of common sewers. We had an intimation just now of the contents of the Fleet-ditch in Ben Jonson's time. We are sorry to trouble the reader with a sight of the contents in the later days of Swift. "Sweepings," says the Dean—

"—— from butchers' stalls, dung, guts, and blood,
"Drown'd puppies, stinking sprats, all drench'd in mud,
"Dead cats and turnip tops come tumbling down the flood."

Since there was nothing to be done with the Fleet-ditch as an open channel, it was wisely resolved, before the erection of the present Mansion-house, to shut it up; not altogether, we are sorry to say, as appears from the correspondent's letter already noticed. Where the Lord Mayor now magnificently entertains politicians of every order formerly stood Stocks-market. Stocks-market made way for the Mansion-house, the Fleet-ditch made way for Stocks-market, Stocks-market again retires to give place to the broad and healthy street of Farringdon, and we have now only to hope that the city authorities, whoever they may be, will educe the moral for which this brief and dirty history is mainly given, and, in the words of a sufferer, remove the last "of the abominations of the place," and not allow for another hour "a huge sewer which receives nearly the whole of the refuse of the northern portion of London to remain uncovered" in the presence of the danger with which the city is environed.

Our space is drawing to a close; but we cannot shake hands with the reader on such a spot as this. We will pay a brief visit together to a quaint and cleaner place or two, and then part company for the present. In Fleet-street, between the market and Shoe-lane, once lived Hardham, the keeper of a snuff shop. He is worth a call.

"He was numberer at Drury-lane Theatre, that is to say, the person who counted the number of people in the house, from a hole over the top of the stage, a practice now discontinued. Whether this employment led him to number snuffs, as well as men, we cannot say, but he was the first who gave them their distinctions that way. Lovers of

"'The pungent grains of titillating dust'

"are indebted to him for the famous compound entitled 37. 'Being passionately fond of theatrical entertainments,' says his biographer, 'he was seldom without embryo Richards and Hotspurs strutting and bellowing in his dining-room, or in the parlour behind his shop. The latter of these apartments was adorned with heads of most of the persons celebrated for dramatic excellence; and to these he frequently referred in the course of his instructions.'"

Hardham had once failed in business, but his integrity was unimpeachable. "He was often entrusted with the care of paying little annual stipends to unfortunate women, and others who were in equal want of relief." He continued such annuities long after they had been stopped by the death or caprice of those who first supplied them, although the receivers were persuaded to the last that the original channel was still flowing. Hardham died in 1772. By his will he bequeathed the interest of 20,000*l.* to a female acquaintance, and at her death he ordered that the principal should go to the poor of his native city, Chichester. Well done old numberer! Such spirits as thine animate the scene long after they have quitted it. Happy we who are permitted to record thy works of love and charity!

In Surrey-street, Strand, once dwelt another spirit, a man who had something to do with theatres also, and who made *his* will too before he died. Reader, look in! You see a fine gentleman finely dressed, a man of the world, and a foolish lover of rank and fashion although he has a knowledge of mankind, and a sense of wit that should hold him high up above such vanities. Hush! He has a visitor, evidently a foreigner, a small man with a lean body—a face full of angles and lines—but an eye that admits of no doubt. You have heard of him before. The host is Congreve, the guest Voltaire. Listen! Congreve speaks of his works as of trifles that are beneath him, and hints to his visitor that he must visit him on no other terms than upon that of a gentleman, who leads a life of plainness and simplicity. Mark and enjoy the noble answer of Voltaire! "*Had you been so unfortunate, Mr. Congreve, as to be a mere gentleman,* I should never have come to see you." Are you not stronger, reader, for the lesson and the sight?

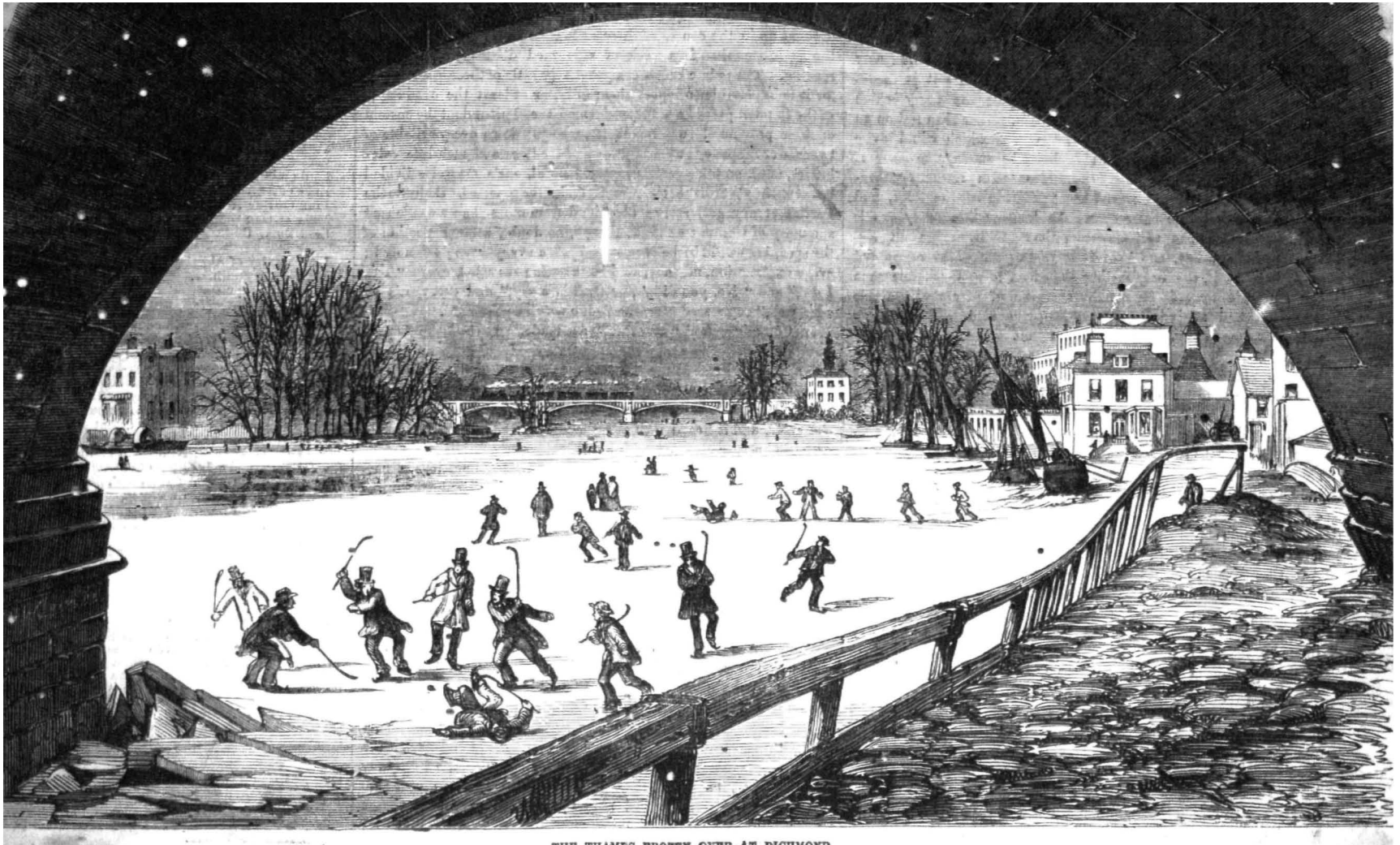
One moment longer. After years of blindness and gout, Congreve, the man of fashion, dies—the ruling passion strong in death. He lays in state in the Jerusalem Chamber, he is buried in Westminster Abbey, and a monument is erected there to his memory by Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough. What could the man of fashion wish more? It was a costly monument, however, for it cost poor Congreve 10,000*l.* His vanity induced him to leave his substance to a fine lady who did not want it, although the relations whom he left behind him were in positive distress. The Duchess bought with part of the money a diamond necklace that came to 7,000*l.*, and for this Congreve had through life scraped his shillings together with what Johnson calls a most "attentive parsimony;" his nearest kin meanwhile starving! We think of the aforesaid Hardham, and take consolation! The brilliant plays of Congreve have a cold lustre of heartlessness upon them that charm whilst they fail to warm you into admiration. They reflect the heartlessness of his own soul. "Everybody, however," finely and humanely says Leigh Hunt, "is innocent in some corner of the mind, and has faith in something;" and Congreve, who could not feel for his own blood, wept in serious verse over queens and marquises, and left elegies for the rich if he left not a sixpence to the poor.

THE SITE OF ANCIENT LONDON.—When Sir Christopher Wren began to build the new St. Paul's, in digging for a foundation, he came to a layer of Saxon graves lined with chalk, some in stone coffins; and at some distance below, the bodies of the British, only lapped in woollen shrouds, fastened with pins of hard wood, most probably box-wood. In the same row, yet deeper (this was 18 feet and more), were the ashes of the Romans, in urns—Britons and Romans together—the conquerors and the conquered, both vanquished. Lower than those graves stood the foundation of old St. Paul's, resting on very close pot-earth; and still lower, nothing but dry sand, sometimes mixed unequally, but mostly so loose that it would pass through the fingers; then water and sand mixed with periwinkles and other sea shells—this was about the level of low-water mark. The gradual rise of the site of London by the formation of shoals, &c., will be readily understood by the above account. It grew by natural causes, and at the time of the arrival of the Romans was probably a rude British stronghold, defended by earthworks, and backed by thick woods towards the north, and surrounded on other sides by an immense extent of water, amid which the present course of the Thames could scarcely be defined.—*The Builder.*

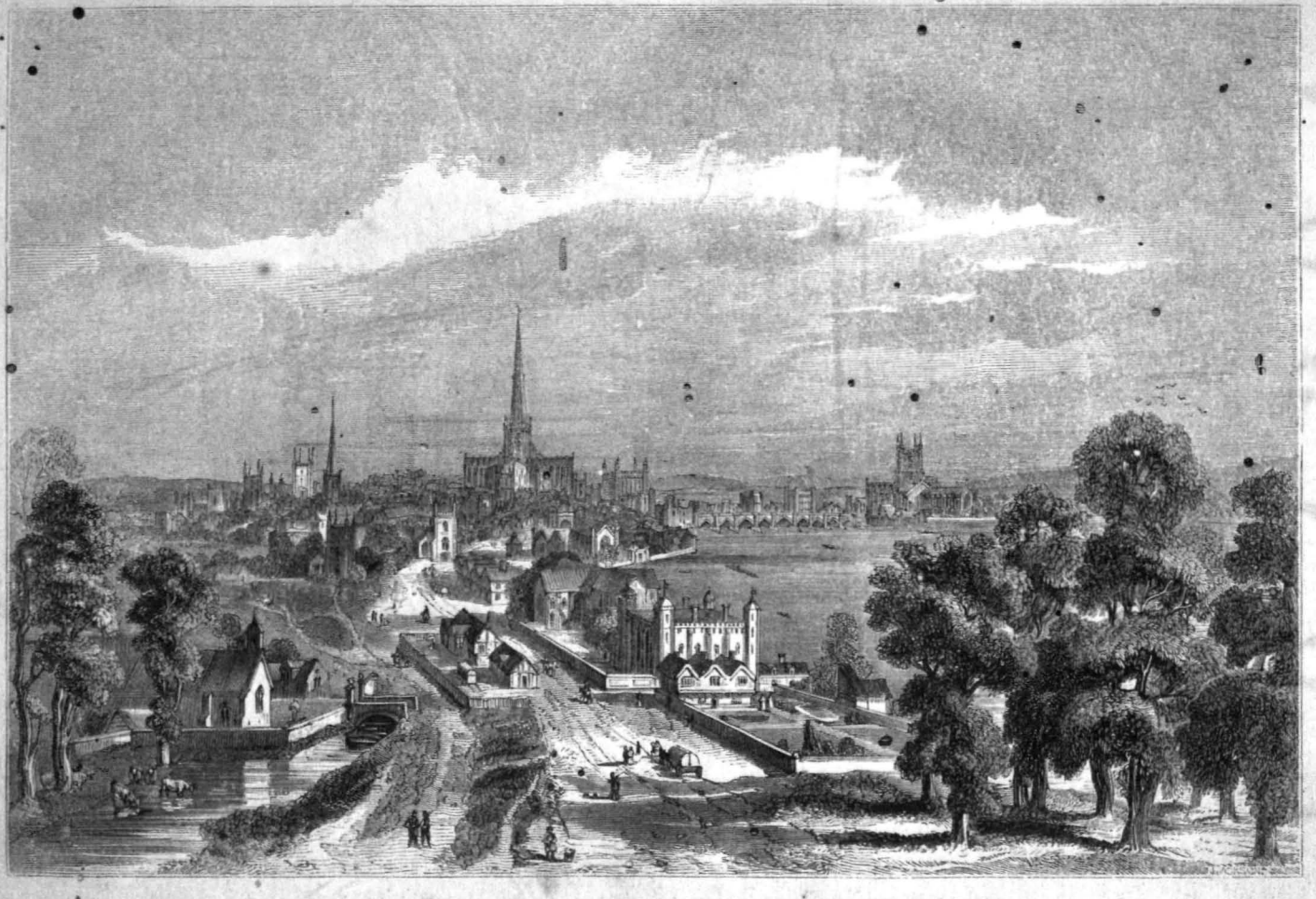
pearance after having been trampled on, or meddled with by the curious in

BRITISH ARCHÆOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.—Yesterday the members of the association paid a third visit to the city for the purpose of inspecting some of those records of past ages of which we are very much accustomed to conceive by faith alone in some Handbook of London, instead of judging for ourselves by ocular demonstration. The place of meeting was Crosby Hall, which still, in the heart of the busy city, shames the debased architecture of the present day. The great hall, the council and throne rooms, now alone remain of this magnificent building, which has alike been the silent spectator of the machinations of the Protector Richard for the throne and the philosophic musings of the great Sir Thomas More, though degraded since to a wool warehouse, but is happily now again restored to somewhat of its pristine beauty. When the company were assembled Mr. Pettigrew introduced Mr. Bernal, who is president this year, and that gentleman in a few sentences gracefully expressed the pleasure he felt at the compliment paid him. The Rev. Thomas Hugo, senior curate of St. Botolph, then read an interesting paper on Crosby Hall and the historical associations connected with it; and after seeing the council room and the throne room, which have also been very well restored, the party went through a hard day's work in fulfilling the programme sketched out for them. First on the list came the church of St. Helen's, hard by Crosby Hall. This singular church consists of two in one—one being on the site of a church built in honour of Helena, the mother of Constantine; and the other the sacred edifice belonging to a priory of Benedictine nuns founded in 1212 by William Fitzwilliam, a goldsmith. A niche is shown in one of the walls of the church with a row of open arches, which communicated with the crypt or cells below, by which means it is imagined that the nuns, when undergoing punishment by incarceration, heard mass in the church above. Here lie buried, under a stately monument, with effigies of himself and his wife, Sir John Crosby, and also Sir William Pickering, whom rumour assigns to be one of the numerous suitors for the hand of the Virgin Queen. The Rev. J. E. Cox, vicar of St. Helen's, performed efficiently the part of Cicerone. The church of St. Andrew Undershaft, so called from the maypole which was annually raised in the street near, was next visited. The principal interest is centred in the monument of Stowe, the quaint, but, *par excellence*, the chronicler of London. The church was newly done up last year, and its glorious east window, containing full-length portraitures of the Kings and Queens from Edward VI. down to Charles II., its gilded roof, frescoed walls, and fine proportions, form a brilliant and imposing *coup d'œil*. St. Botolph church contains little worthy of notice except a picture of Charles I., reported to be by Vandycke, in which the King resembles very much the glorious picture by that artist of him on his white horse. The day was concluded by burrowing down below the surface of the earth into a very beautiful crypt, under a cabinet-maker's shop at the corner of Leadenhall-street. It very much resembles the one under Gerrard Hall which has been sacrificed for the city improvements, but it is thought by some to be of rather an earlier date. Various origins are assigned to it—either that it was merely a domestic crypt, as was the one at Gerrard Hall, or that of a church dedicated to St. Michael. It is still very much choked up with rubbish, but the accumulation of years had been dug away from one of the pillars to the base to show where the floor once was. There is every indication, also, of the vault having been more extensive, but enough is visible to show that it must have been a noble undercroft, and we hope that it may long be spared the devastating effects of city improvements.

MEMORIAL TABLETS IN LONDON. — The Council of the Society of Arts have just erected six new memorial tablets on houses which are of historic interest, as having been occupied by celebrated men. The residences of an Emperor, two statesmen, a philosopher, and two artists have been thus distinguished. These china plaques will now be found on front of 15, Buckingham-street, Strand, where Peter the Great lived for a short time; on 25, Arlington-street, for many years the residence of Sir Robert Walpole; on 14, Savile-row, where Sheridan lived; on 35, St. Martin's-street, Leicester-square, for some time Sir Isaac Newton's home; on 36, Castle street, Oxford-street, where James Barry, the painter, received the statesman Burke; and on 30, Leicester square, a new building occupied by Archbishop Tennyson's School, which stands on the site of Hogarth's home.



THE THAMES FROZEN OVER AT RICHMOND.



RESTORATION OF THE ANCIENT THOROUGHFARE FROM WESTMINSTER TO LONDON.

LONDON.

EDITED BY CHARLES KNIGHT.

VOLUME I.

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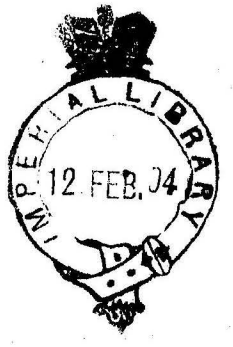

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WITH

THE NAMES OF THE AUTHORS OF EACH PAPER.

In the Introduction, or rather Prospectus, of 'LONDON,' we have said—"If the encouragement of the public should enable this work to be carried forward to something like a general completeness, its miscellaneous character may be reduced into system by chronological and topographical Indexes." That encouragement has been bestowed; and the Editor ventures therefore to hope that the plan which he conceived of producing a new work on London, "wholly different from any which has preceded it," has been carried out in a manner which may enable him to look to its completion within moderate limits, when its "miscellaneous character" will appear not wholly without a plan. In the mean while, the following Analytical Table of Contents will be of some assistance to those readers who may desire to use the volume for reference.

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'I pray you, let us satisfy our eyes
With the memorials, and the things of fame,
That do renown this city.'

It was an afternoon walk for the stranger who thus desired to 'see the reliques of some ancient Dalmatian town, whose Roman monuments covered a few acres. But London! in what time shall we visit her 'memorials,' so as to '*satisfy* our eyes?' What amount of labour does it require to become acquainted with her 'things of fame?' A week, or a month, may indeed enable us to *see* those 'reliques' which every one sees; but 'memorials' as true and as interesting lie perishing or hidden in dark corners; and there are 'things of fame' in the meanest alleys. Their chief value, however, consists in the associations which they suggest; and these do not always lie upon the surface. To comprehend *modern* London we must 'make a stand upon the ancient way, and then look about us;' to be properly interested in *ancient* London we must turn from our old Chroniclers, and Topographers, and Poets, and Memoir-writers, and look upon its living scenes, ever changing in their outward forms, but essentially the slow growth of a long antiquity.

We propose *in this spirit* to produce A NEW WORK ON LONDON; and the principle which we have thus indicated of looking at the Present through the Past, and at the Past through the Present, requires that our Work shall be wholly different from any which has preceded it. It will neither be a 'Survey' of London, nor a 'History' of London. Its arrangement will neither be topographical nor chronological. It will not travel 'with tedious steps and slow' from Portsoken Ward to Westminster; nor begin at the beginning with King Lud, and end at the end with Queen Victoria. Nor will it, in point of fact, be ambitious of *any* classification. London, which Camden has called *totius Britanniæ epitome*, is too vast a thing to be analysed, and sorted, and labelled,—at least in a book which will endeavour to combine amusement with information. The greatest and the meanest features of such a city lie mingled together, in the same way that the mightiest and the minutest works of Nature are presented to the observing eye. That traveller is to our minds the most faithful, the most entertaining, and perhaps the most scientific, who, whilst he is measuring the height of an Alpine mountain, makes himself familiar with the habits of the little marmot that burrows in its crevices.

The plan of publication which we shall adopt will also, in some degree, deter-

mine the *miscellaneous* character of the proposed work. We shall publish a *Weekly* Sheet, devoted, for the most part, to some portion of the great total of London which shall be complete in itself. This subject must necessarily be of no abstract nature—no mere disquisition upon remote and lifeless matters—but something which *can be seen*, and thus copied for the reader's eye, or made more intelligible by the *graphic art*. OUR LONDON WILL BE PICTORIAL. The several artists of eminence who will be engaged upon this undertaking will labour upon a well-defined principle—*that of uniting to the imaginative power the strictest fidelity in every detail of Architecture and Costume*. In the same spirit will the writers work. The time is past when it was thought that what was accurate could not be amusing; and in the great subject before us, whether in its modern or its ancient aspects, the truest delineation will, unquestionably, be the most interesting.

Of the probable extent of this work the editor can at present form no very exact notion. It is the less necessary that he should do so, as every *number*, every *part*, and every *volume*, will be, as far as it goes, complete in itself. If the encouragement of the public should enable this work to be carried forward to something like a general completeness, its miscellaneous character may be reduced into system by chronological and topographical Indexes. But, as it proceeds, it will have all the charm of variety. For example:—A Memoir on the Maps of London for three centuries, showing the gradual spread of the great Babel, may fitly be in company with a picture of its locomotive facilities, through all the phases of Wherry, Sedan, Hackney Coach, Cabriolet, Omnibus, and Steam-Boat. We may linger about Smithfield, with its horse-races of the days of Henry II., its tournaments, its wagers of battle, its penances, its martyrdoms, its Bartholomew fairs, and its cattle-market, without feeling that any of its associations are incongruous or unworthy of description and reflection. The Cock-Lane Ghost is a matter of history as much as the records of that fatal Traitor's Gate of the Tower, over which might have been written the terrible words of Dante—

'All hope abandon, ye who enter here.'

The City Poet, with his tawdry Lord Mayor's state and doggrel verses, belongs to the social history of London as distinctly as the classical inventor of the Masques in which James and Charles delighted. The Christmas revels of the Lord of Misrule in the Temple, and the triumphant entry of Henry V. after the battle of Agincourt, have each had their historians, and they may each form episodes in our pages. Tempest drew from the life the Cries of London in the days of Anne, and they may be found in company with some account of Catnach's ballads in our day. The glorious picture-satires of Hogarth may tell us of a generation that is past, whilst the splendid caricatures of Gillray may slide into the generation that is present.

There are many aspects of Society in London which are not fit to be described; there are scenes, past and present, which are improper to be exhibited to the general eye. Those which a parent would not wish his child to look upon will never be delineated in this book. We shall not, however, from any false refinement, confine ourselves to what is the most agreeable. All reasoning beings should know that there is crime, and ignorance, and suffering, and sorrow, in such an immense city, as well as propriety, and elegance, and comfort, and pleasure.

But, by a careful attention to what we are and what we were—to our improvements, as well as to some things in which we begin to find out we have not improved—we may indirectly show how the condition of every Londoner is to be ameliorated; and how, by diminishing ignorance, we may diminish crime; and, by cultivating innocent pleasures, do something to drive out unlawful excitements.

We have a few observations to add. Such a work as we hope to produce may interest every English reader, whether he be a resident in London or in Australia. It treats of the largest city in the world,—whose inhabitants are in intercourse, commercial, political, or religious, with almost the whole human race,—which has been the scene of the most stirring events of history,—which has been a city of progress from its first foundation,—which has sent forth its literature through four centuries to the uttermost ends of the earth,—and which is full, therefore, not only of material monuments of the past, but of the more abiding memorials which exist in imperishable books. If the *Tabard* Inn at Southwark is now but a waggoner's yard, with its accompanying liquor-shop and tap-room, we have Chaucer's immortal picture of 'that hostelrie,' and its guests—

'Well nine-and-twenty in a compagnie,
Of sundry folk;'—

and he will tell us

'The chambres and the stables weren wide.'

If *East Cheap* has lost all its ancient characteristics in the improvements of London Bridge, Lydgate will show us that *there*

'Pewter pots they clattered on a heap;
There was harp, pipe, and minstrelsy.'

If *Finsbury* and *Islington* are covered with interminable rows of houses, Ben Jonson shall call to mind 'the archers of Finsbury, or the citizens that come a-ducking to Islington ponds.' If *Spring Garden* be no longer green, Garrard, the gossiping correspondent of the great Lord Strafford, shall inform us of its 'Bowling,' its 'Ordinary of six shillings a-meal, continual bibbing and drinking wine all day long under the trees, and two or three quarrels every week.' If the *Devil Tavern*, with its Apollo Club, has perished, Squire Western's favourite song of 'Old Sir Simon the King' shall bring back the memory of Simon Wadloe, its landlord, with Jonson's verses over the door of the Apollo Room. If the *River Fleet* no longer runs across Holborn, Pope shall recall that polluted stream,—

'Than whom no sluice of mud
With deeper sable blots the silver flood.'

If the glories of White's, and Will's, and the Grecian, and the St. James's, have passed away, in the fall of Coffeehouses and the rise of Clubs,—if the stranger can no longer expect to walk without obstruction into a common room where wit is as current as tea and muffins, and a Dryden stands by the fire with a young Pope gazing upon him,—he may yet live in the social life of the days of Anne, and people the solitary Coffeehouses with imaginary Swifts, and Addisons, and Steeles. Such, and so various, are the literary 'memorials' of London; and these literary 'memorials' are, in truth, amongst her best antiquities. As a *city of progress*, her material remains of the past are comparatively few; but the mightiest of the earth—those who have made our language immortal and universal—have dwelt within her walls, and their records have outlived brick and stone.

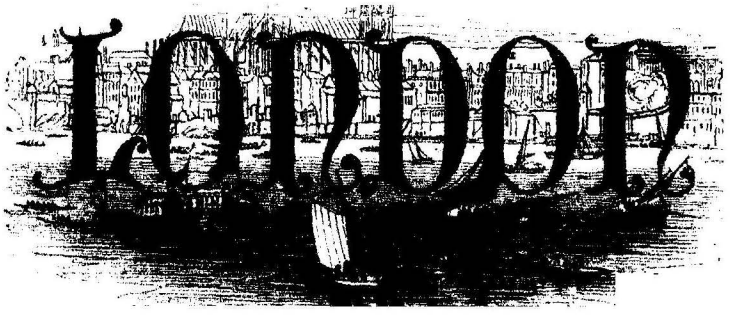
To one of observation, and reflection, and adequate knowledge, *everything* in London is *suggestive*. In her *external* features we read the history of her *past*, and the description of her *present social state*.

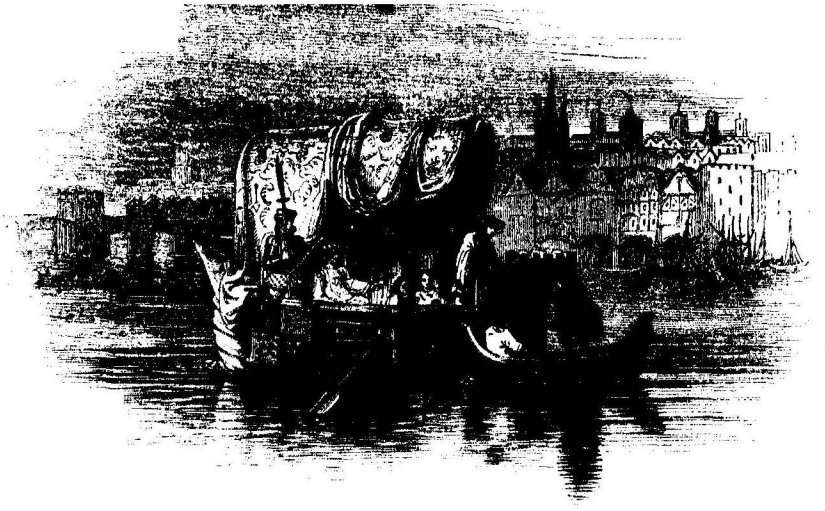
'The things of fame
That do renown this city,'—

Churches, palaces, theatres, exhibitions, courts of justice, prisons, hospitals,—parks, squares, streets, bridges, wharfs, docks, warehouses, markets, shops, factories, inns,—pavements, sewers, gas-lights, water-pipes,—post-offices, railroads, steam-boats, public carriages—have each their tale of that mighty stirring of Humanity which in its aggregate is a spectacle of real sublimity unequalled in the world. It is the more sublime and the more wonderful that all this mass—with its manifold associations of Government, Municipal Arrangements, Police, Supply of Food, Population, Disease, Mortality, Industry, Wealth, Poverty, Crime, Religion, Charity, Education, Literature, Science, Arts, Amusements, Dress, Manners, Domestic Life—is ever-growing and ever-changing. While we are putting down the figures the facts are shifting. We shall not, therefore, trouble our readers with many figures. But the *great* aspects of London humanity are written in tolerably permanent characters, whether of the past or the present. It will be our duty sometimes to digest the abiding facts that are not likely to elude our vision or our grasp—sometimes to

'Catch ere she flies the Cynthia of the minute.'

If what is permanent, and what is fleeting, shall be found equally without attraction, the fault will be in ourselves and not in our subject. The interest of that subject we believe to be universal. The features of such a city, physical and moral, present and antiquarian, if truly and strikingly presented, are to be looked upon with interest and curiosity, by the stranger as well as the citizen who daily hears the sound of Bow-bell. London is not England, as Paris is said to be France; neither is she the head and England the body, as used to be set down, but she is so identified with the whole empire—she absorbs and returns again so much of the general prosperity—that what belongs to her belongs to all. To the *British* public, then, we offer, in confident hope of *their* support, *our*





[Richard II. and Gower.]

I.—THE SILENT HIGHWAY.

One of the most remarkable pictures of ancient manners which has been transmitted to us is that in which the poet Gower describes the circumstances under which he was commanded by King Richard II.

"To make a book after his hest."

The good old rhymer,—"the moral Gower," as Chaucer calls him,—who probably resided in Southwark, where his monument may yet be seen in the church of St. Mary Overies, had taken boat; and upon the broad river he met the king in his stately barge. It was an accidental meeting, he tells us. The monarch, who had come most probably from his palace of Westminster, where even thousands ministered, it is said, to his luxurious tastes, espied the familiar face of the minstrel, and stopped him upon that great highway of London, which was an open road for the meanest as for the highest. He called him on board his own vessel, and desired him to book "some new thing." This was the origin of the '*Confessio Amantis.*' But the poet shall record the story in his own simple words:—

"As it befel upon a tide,
As thing which should then betide,
Under the towné of New Troy,
Which took of Brute his firsté joy;

In Thames, when it was flowing,
As I by boaté came rowing,
So as fortune her time set,
My liege lord perchance I met,
And so befel, as I came nigh,
Out of my boat, when he me sygh,*
He bade me come into his barge:
And when I was with him at large,
Among other thingés said
He hath this charge upon me laid,
And bade me do my business,
That to his high worthiness
Some new thingé I should book,
That he himself it might look,
After the form of my writing.
And thus upon his commanding.
Mine hearté is well the more glad
To writé so as he me bade."

Nothing can be more picturesque than this description, and nothing can more forcibly carry us into the very heart of the past. With the exception of some of the oldest portions of the Tower of London, there is scarcely a brick or a stone left standing that may present to us a memorial of "the king's chamber"† of four hundred and fifty years ago. There, indeed, is the river, still flowing and still ebbing,—the most ancient thing we can look upon,—which made London what it was and what it is. Nearly all that then adorned its banks has perished; and many of the stirring histories of the busy life that moved upon its waters have become to us as obscure as the legend of "New Troy." But the poet calls upon our imagination to fill up the void.

One of the most ancient pictorial representations of London which exists is of a date some fifty years later than the poem we have quoted. It is found in a manuscript preserved in the British Museum, and represents the captivity of the Duke of Orleans in the Tower. The manuscript itself, which consists of the poems of the royal captive, was probably copied in the time of Henry VI.; but the illumination purports to represent the London of an earlier date, with its bridge, its lofty-spired cathedral, its numerous churches, its gabled houses. Under these walls we may imagine the poet and his patron to have glided, amidst crowded wherries, and attendant barges, and the merry sounds of song and clarion, and the shouts of the people. Often had the "imaginative" king so passed between his palace of Westminster and his Tower of London. But the state was to end in misery, and degradation, and a solitary and mysterious death.

The 'Prologue' of Gower, in the true spirit of the romantic times, tells us of the town which was founded by the Trojan Brute. Here was the fable which the middle-age minstrels rejoiced in, and which History has borrowed from Poetry without any compromise of her propriety. The origin of nations must be fabulous; and if we would penetrate into the dark past we must be satisfied with the torch-light which fable presents to us. We commend, therefore, the belief of the good citizens of London, who, in the time of Henry VI., sent the king a copy of an ancient tract, which says of London. "According to the credit of chronicles it

* Saw.

† *Camera Regia*; which title, immediately after the Norman Conquest, London began to have.—CAMDEN.

is considerably older than Rome; and that it was, by the same Trojan author, built by Brute, after the likeness of great Troy, before that built by Romulus and Remus. Whence to this day it useth and enjoyeth the ancient city Troy's liberties, rights, and customs."* This is dealing with a legend in a business-like manner, worthy of grave aldermen and sheriffs. Between Brute and Richard II. there is a long interval; and the chroniclers have filled it up with many pleasant stories, and the antiquarians have embellished it with many ingenious theories. We must leap over all these. One ancient writer, however, who speaks from his own knowledge,—William Fitz-Stephen, who died in 1191,—has left us a record in his 'Description of London,' which will take us back a few hundred years further. The original is in Latin. "The wall of the city is high and great, continued with seven gates, which are made double, and on the north distinguished with turrets by spaces: likewise on the south London hath been enclosed with walls and towers, but the large river of Thames, well stored with fish, and in which the tide ebbs and flows, by continuance of time hath washed, worn away, and cast down those walls." Here, then, six hundred and fifty years ago, we find the river-bank of London in the same state as described by Sir Thomas More in his imaginary capital of Amaurote:—"The city is compassed about with a high and thick stone wall, full of turrets and bulwarks. A dry ditch, but deep and broad, and overgrown with bushes, briers, and thorns, goeth about three sides or quarters of the city. To the fourth side the river itself serveth as a ditch."† The Saxon chronicle tells us that in the year 1052 Earl Godwin, with his navy, passed along the southern side of the river, and so assailed the walls. A hundred and fifty years after, in the time of Fitz-Stephen, the walls were gone. About the same period arose the stone bridge of London; but that has perished before the eyes of our own generation.

There is another passage in Fitz-Stephen which takes us, as do most of his descriptions, into the every-day life of the ancient Londoners—their schools, their feasting, and their sports:—

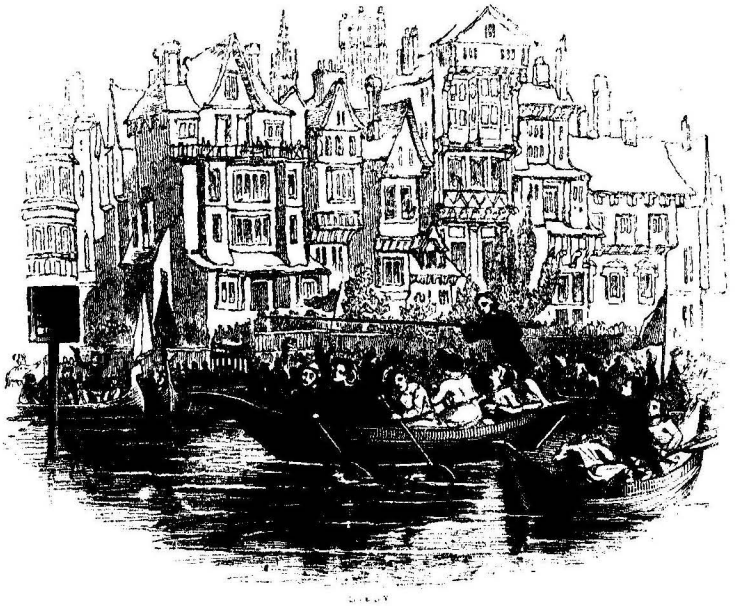
"In Easter holidays they fight battles on the water. A shield is hanged on a pole, fixed in the midst of the stream; a boat is prepared without oars, to be carried by violence of the water, and in the forepart thereof standeth a young man, ready to give charge upon the shield with his lance. If so be he break his lance against the shield and doth not fall, he is thought to have performed a worthy deed. If so be, without breaking his lance, he runneth strongly against the shield, down he falleth into the water, for the boat is violently forced with the tide; but on each side of the shield ride two boats, furnished with two young men, which recover him that falleth as soon as they may. Upon the bridge, wharfs, and houses by the river-side,‡ stand great numbers to see and laugh thereat."

The sport, which may be still seen amongst the watermen of the Seine, and of the Rhine, was the delight of the bold youth of London in the days of Henry II. Fitz-Stephen tells us of this amongst the sports of the people generally; and the cir-

* Stow, book i. † Utopia, b. ii. c. ii.

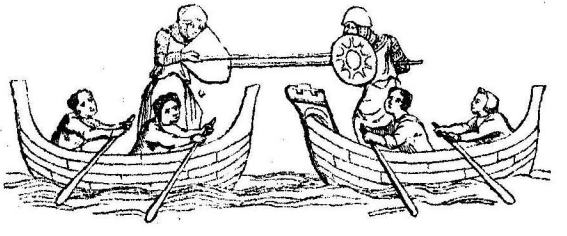
‡ We give the translation of Stow, but he appears here to have taken a little licence with the original:—"*Supra pontem et in solariis supra fluvium.*"

cumstance shows that they were accustomed to exercise themselves upon their noble river. Four centuries afterwards Stow saw a somewhat similar game:—"I have seen also in the summer season, upon the river of Thames, some rowed in wherries, with staves in their hands, flat at the fore-end, running one against another, and,



[Water Quintain.]

for the most part, one or both of them were overthrown and well ducked." Of the antiquity of these customs we have evidence in two drawings of a beautiful illuminated 'History of the Old Testament,' &c., of the fourteenth century, in the British Museum. Howel says, "There was in former times a sport used upon the Thames, which is *now discontinued:* it was for two wherries to row, and run one



[Water Tournaments.]

against the other, with staves in their hands, flat at the fore-end; which kind of recreation is much practised amongst the gondolas of Venice."*

From the time of Fitz-Stephen to that of Gower we may readily conceive that the water-communication between one part of London and another, and between

* Londinopolis: 1657.

London and Westminster, was constantly increasing. A portion of London Bridge was moveable, which enabled vessels of burden to pass up the river to unload at Queenhithe and other wharfs. Stairs (called bridges) and Water-gates studded the shores of both cities. Palaces arose, such as the Savoy, where the powerful nobles kept almost regal state. The Courts of Law were fixed at Westminster; and thither the citizens and strangers from the country daily resorted, preferring the easy highway of the Thames to the almost impassable road that led from Westminster to the village of Charing, and onward to London. John Lydgate, who wrote in the time of Henry V., has left us a very curious poem, which we shall often have occasion to refer to, entitled 'London Lyckpeny.' He gives us a picture of his coming to London to obtain legal redress of some grievance, but without money to pursue his suit. Upon quitting Westminster Hall, he says,

"Then to Westminster *Gate* I presently went."

This is undoubtedly the Water-gate; and, without describing anything beyond the cooks, whom he found busy with their bread and beef at the gate, "when the sun was at high prime," he adds,

"Then unto *London* I did me hie."

By water he no doubt went, for through Charing he would have made a day's journey. Wanting money, he has no choice but to return to the country; and having to go "into Kent," he applies to the watermen at Billingsgate:—

"Then hied I me to Billingsgate,
And one cried *hoo*—go we hence:
I pray'd a bargeman, for God's sake,
That he would spare me my expense.
Thou scap'st not here, quoth he, under two pence."

We have a corroboration of the accuracy of this picture in Lambarde's 'Perambulation of Kent.' The old topographer informs us that in the time of Richard II. the inhabitants of Milton and Gravesend agreed to carry in their boats, from London to Gravesend, a passenger, with his truss or farthell, for two-pence.

The poor Kentish suitor, without two-pence in his pocket to pay the Gravesend bargemen, takes his solitary way on foot homeward. The *gate* where he was welcomed with the cry of *hoo*—ho, ahoy—was the great landing-place of the coasting-vessels; and the king here anciently took his toll upon imports and exports. The Kentishman comes to Billingsgate from Cornhill; but it was not an uncommon thing for boats, even in those times, to accomplish the feat of passing through the fall occasioned by the narrowness of the arches of London Bridge; and the loss of life in these adventures was not an unfrequent occurrence. Gifford, in a note upon a passage in Ben Jonson's 'Staple of News,' says somewhat pettishly of the old bridge, "had an alderman or a turtle been lost there, the nuisance would have been long since removed." A greater man than an alderman—John Mowbray, the second Duke of Norfolk—nearly perished there in 1428. This companion of the glories of Henry V. took his barge at St. Mary Overies, with many a gentleman, squire, and yeoman, "and prepared to pass through London Brigg. Whereof the foresaid barge, through misgovernment of steering, fell upon the piles and overwhelmed. The which was cause of spilling many a gentle man, and other; the more ruth was! But as God would, the Duke himself, and two or three other gentle men, seeing that mischief, leaped up on the piles, and so

were saved through help of them that were above the brigg, with casting down of ropes."* But there were landing-places in abundance between Westminster and London Bridge, so that a danger such as this was not necessary to be incurred. When the unfortunate Eleanor Cobham, Duchess of Gloucester, was condemned to do penance in London, in three open places, on three several days, she was brought by water from Westminster; and on the 13th November, 1440, was put on shore at the Temple bridge; on the 15th, at the Old Swan; and, on the 17th, at Queenhithe. Here, exactly four centuries ago, we have the same stairs described by the same names as we find at the present day. The Old Swan (close to London Bridge) was the *Old* Swan in the time of Henry VI., as it continued to be in the time of Elizabeth. If we turn to the earliest maps of London we find, in the same way, Broken Wharf, and Paul's Wharf, and Essex Stairs, and Whitehall Stairs. The abiding-places of the watermen appear to have been as unchanging as their thoroughfare—the same river ever gliding, and the same inlets from that broad and cheerful highway to the narrow and gloomy streets.

The watermen of London, like every other class of the people, were once musical; and their "oars kept time" to many a harmony, which, if not so poetical as the song of the gondoliers, was full of the heart of merry England. The old city chronicler, Fabyan, tells us that John Norman, Mayor of London (he held this dignity in 1454), was "the first of all mayors who brake that ancient and old-continued custom of *riding* to Westminster upon the morrow of Simon and Jude's day." John Norman "*was rowed thither by water*, for the which the watermen made of him a roundel, or song, to his great praise, the which began,

'Row the boat, Norman, row to thy leman.'"

The watermen's ancient chorus, as we collect from old ballads, was

"Heave and how, rumbelow;"

and their burden was still the same in the time of Henry VIII., not forgetting, "Row the boat, Norman."† Well might the first mayor who carried the pomp of the city to the great Thames, and made

"The barge *he* sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burn on the water,"

deserve the praises of watermen in all time! We could willingly spare many more intrinsically valuable things than the city water-pageant; for it takes us even now into the old forms of life; and if it shows us more than all other pageants something of the perishableness of power and dignity, it has a fine, antique grandeur about it, and tells us that London, and what belongs to London, are not of yesterday.

We every now and then turn up in the old Chronicles, and Memoirs, and Letters that have been rescued from mice and mildew, some graphic description of the use of the river as the common highway of London. These old writers were noble hands at scene-painting. What a picture Hall gives us of the populousness of the Thames!—the perfect contrast to Wordsworth's

"The river glideth at his own sweet will"—

in the story which he tells us of the Archbishop of York, after leaving the widow

* Harl. MS., No. 565, quoted in 'Chronicles of London Bridge.' † Skelton.

of Edward IV. in the sanctuary of Westminster, sitting "alone below on the rushes, all desolate and dismayed," returning home to York Place in the dawning of the day; "and when he opened his windows and looked on the Thames, he might see the river full of boats of the Duke of Gloucester his servants, watching that no person should go to sanctuary, nor none should pass unsearched." Cavendish, in his 'Life of Wolsey,' furnishes as graphic a description of the great Cardinal hurrying to and fro on the highway of the Thames, between his imperious master and the injured Katharine, when Henry had become impatient of the tedious conferences of the Court at Blackfriars sitting on the question of his divorce, and desired to throw down with the strong hand the barriers that kept him from the Lady Anne:—"Thus this court passed from session to session, and day to day, in so much that a certain day the king sent for my lord at the breaking up one day of the court to come to him into Bridewell. And to accomplish his commandment he went unto him, and being there with him in communication in his grace's privy chamber from eleven until twelve of the clock and past at noon, my lord came out and departed from the king, and took his barge at the Black Friars, and so went to his house at Westminster. The Bishop of Carlisle, being with him in his barge, said unto him, (wiping the sweat from his face,) 'Sir,' quoth he, 'it is a very hot day.' 'Yea,' quoth my Lord Cardinal, 'if ye had been as well chafed as I have been within this hour, ye would say it were very hot.'" Between Westminster and the Tower, and the Tower and Greenwich, the Thames was especially the royal road. When Henry VII. willed the coronation of his Queen Elizabeth, she came from Greenwich attended by "barges freshly furnished with banners and streamers of silk." When Henry VIII. avowed his marriage with Anne Boleyn, she was brought by "all the crafts of London" from Greenwich to the Tower, "trumpets, shawms, and other divers instruments, all the way playing and making great melody." The river was not only the festival highway, but the more convenient one, for kings as well as subjects. Hall tells us, "This year (1536), in December, was the Thames of London all frozen over, *wherefore* the king's majesty, with his beautiful spouse Queen Jane, rode throughout the city of London to Greenwich." The interesting volume of the 'Privy Purse Expenses of Henry VIII.' contains item upon item of sums paid to watermen for waiting with barge and boat. The barge was evidently always in attendance upon the king; and the great boat was ever busy, moving household stuff and servants from Westminster to Greenwich or to Richmond. In 1531 we have a curious evidence of the king being deep in his polemical studies, in a record of payment "to John, the king's bargeman, for *coming* twice from Greenwich to York Place with a great boat with books for the king." We see the "great Eliza" on the Thames, in all her pomp, as Raleigh saw her out of his prison-window in the Tower, in 1592, as described in a letter from Arthur Gorges to Cecil:—"Upon a report of her majesty's being at Sir George Carew's, Sir W. Raleigh, having gazed and sighed a long time at his study-window, from whence he might discern the barges and boats about the Blackfriars stairs, suddenly he brake out into a great distemper, and sware that his enemies had on purpose brought her majesty thither to break his gall in sunder with Tantalus' torment, that when she went away he might see death before his eyes; with many such-like conceits. And, as a man transported with passion, he swore

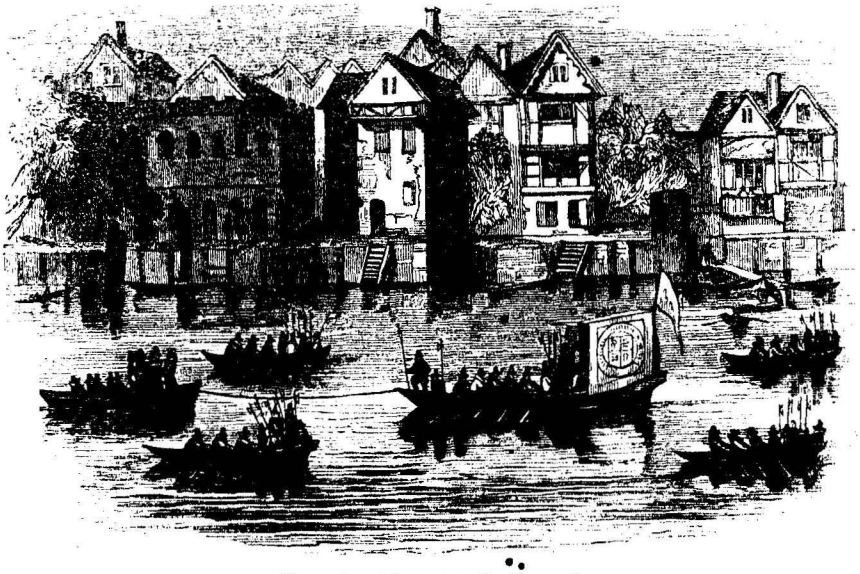
to Sir George Carew that he would disguise himself, and get into a pair of oars to ease his mind with but a sight of the queen." In the time of Elizabeth and the First James, and onward to very recent days, the North bank of the Thames was studded with the palaces of the nobles; and each palace had its landing-place, and its private retinue of barges and wherries; and many a freight of the brave and beautiful has been borne, amidst song and merriment, from house to house, to join the masque and the dance; and many a wily statesman, muffled in his cloak, has glided along unseen in his boat to some dark conference with his ambitious neighbour. Nothing could then have been more picturesque than the Strand, with its broad gardens, and lofty trees, and embattled turrets and pinnacles. Upon the river itself, busy as it was, fleets of swans were ever sailing; and they ventured unmolested into that channel which is now narrowed by vessels from every region. Paulus Jovius, who died in 1552, describing the Thames, says, "This river abounds in swans, swimming in flocks; the sight of whom, and their noise, are vastly agreeable to the fleets that meet them in their course." Shakspere must have seen this sight, when he made York compare the struggle of his followers at the battle of Wakefield to a swan encountering a tidal stream:—

"As I have seen a swan,
With bootless labour swim against the tide,
And spend her strength with over-matching waves."

But there were those, during three centuries, to whom the beauties of the silent highway could have offered no pleasure. The Thames was the road by which the victim of despotism came from the Tower to Westminster Hall, in most cases to return to his barge with the edge of the axe towards his face. One example is enough to suggest many painful recollections. When the Duke of Buckingham was conducted from his trial to the barge, "Sir Thomas Lovel desired him to sit on the cushions and carpet ordained for him. He said, 'Nay; for when I went to Westminster I was Duke of Buckingham; now I am but Edward Bohun, the most caitiff of the world.' "† But these exhibitions, frequent as they were, occupied little of the thoughts of those who were moving upon the Thames, in hundreds of boats, intent upon business or amusement. In the beginning of the seventeenth century the river was at the height of its glory as the great thoroughfare of London. Howel maintains that the river of Thames hath not her fellow, "if regard be had to those forests of masts which are perpetually upon her; the variety of smaller wooden bottoms playing up and down; the stately palaces that are built upon both sides of her banks so thick; which made divers foreign ambassadors affirm that the most glorious sight in the world, take water and land together, was to come upon a high tide from Gravesend, and shoot the bridge to Westminster."‡ Of the "smaller wooden bottoms," Stow computes that there were in his time as many as two thousand; and he makes the very extraordinary statement, that there were forty thousand watermen upon the rolls of the company, and that they could furnish twenty thousand men for the fleet. The private watermen of the court and of the nobility were doubtless included in this large number. It is evident, from the representations of a royal procession in the early times of James I., that, even on common occasions, the sovereign moved upon

Henry VI., part III. † Hall. ‡ Londinopolis, p. 403.

the Thames with regal pomp, surrounded with many boats of guards and musicians :—



[Procession of James I. on the Thames.]

The Inns of Court, too, filled as they were not only with the great practitioners of the law, but with thousands of wealthy students, gave ample employment to the watermen. Upon the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth to the Palatine, in 1613, the gentlemen of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn presented a sumptuous masque at court. "These maskers, with their whole train in all triumphant manner and good order, took barge at Winchester Stairs, about seven of the clock that night, and rowed to Whitehall against the tide: the chief maskers went in the king's barge royally adorned, and plenteously furnished with a great number of great wax lights, that they alone made a glorious show: other gentlemen went in the prince's barge, and certain other went in other fair barges, and were led by two admirals: besides all these, they had four lusty warlike galleys to convoy and attend them; each barge and galley, being replenished with store of torch-lights, made so rare and brave a show upon the water, as the like was never seen upon the Thames."* When Charles was created Prince of Wales, in 1616, he came from Barn Elms to Whitehall in great aquatic state. In 1625, when Henrietta Maria arrived in London (June 16), "the king and queen in the royal barge, with many other barges of honour and thousands of boats, passed through London Bridge to Whitehall; infinite numbers, besides these, in wherries, standing in houses, ships, lighters, western barges, and on each side of the shore."† What a contrast does this splendour and rejoicing present to the scene which a few years disclosed!—"The barge-windows," (says Mr. Mead, the writer of this letter,) "notwithstanding the vehement shower, were open: and all the people

* Howes' Continuation of Stow's Annals, p. 1007. † Ellis's Letters, vol. iii. p. 196.

shouting amain. She put out her hand, and shaked it unto them." The Whitehall, to which the daughter of Henri Quatre was thus conveyed, had another tale to tell in some twenty-three years; and the long tragedy of the fated race of the Stuarts almost reaches its catastrophe, when, in a cold winter night of 1688, the wife of James II. takes a common boat at Whitehall to fly with her child to some place of safety; and when in a few weeks later the fated king steps into a barge, surrounded by Dutch guards, amidst the triumph of his enemies, and the pity even of those good men who blamed his obstinacy and rashness: "I saw him take barge," says Evelyn,—"a sad sight." But let us turn from political changes to those more enduring revolutions which changes of manners produce.

We have before us a goodly folio volume of some six or seven hundred pages, closely printed, and containing about seventy thousand lines, for the most part of heroic verse, entitled "All the Works of John Taylor, the Water-Poet, being sixty and three in number, collected into one volume by the Author."* John Taylor, who made this collection of his tracts in 1630, was literally a Thames waterman, working daily for his bread. He says,

"I have a trade, much like an alchemist,
That oft-times by extraction, if I list,
With sweating labour at a wooden oar
I'll get the coin'd, refined, silver ore;
Which I count better than the sharping tricks
Of cozening tradesmen, or rich politicks,
Or any proud fool, ne'er so proud or wise,
That does my needful honest trade despise." †

The waterman's verses are not so ambitious as those of the Venetian gondolier, Antonio Bianchi, who wrote an epic poem in twelve cantos; but they possess a great deal of rough vigour, and altogether open to us very curious views of London manners in the early part of the seventeenth century. Taylor is never ashamed of his trade; and he cannot endure it to be supposed that his waterman's vocation is incompatible with the sturdiest assertion of his rights to the poetical dignity:—

"It chanc'd one evening, on a reedy bank,
The Muses sat together in a rank;
Whilst in my boat I did by water wander,
Repeating lines of Hero and Leander:
The triple three took great delight in that;
Call'd me ashore, and caus'd me sit and chat,
And in the end, when all our talk was done,
They gave to me a draught of Helicon,
Which proved to me a blessing and a curse,
To fill my pate with verse, and empt my purse." ‡

In one of his controversies—for he generally had some stiff quarrel on hand with witlings who looked down upon him—he says, addressing William Fennor, "the king's rhyming poet,"

"Thou say'st that Poetry descended is
From Poverty: thou tak'st thy mark amiss.
In spite of weal or woe, or want of pelf,
It is a kingdom of content itself."

Such a spirit would go far to make a writer whose works would be worth looking

* Taylor, after the publication of this volume, printed about fifty more tracts, in prose and verse.

† Taylor's Motto, p. 50. ‡ Ibid., p. 55.

at two centuries after the praise or abuse of his contemporaries was forgotten; and so homely John Taylor, amongst the race of satirists and manner-painters, is not to be despised. "The gentleman-like sculler at the Hope on the Bank-side" (as he makes Fennor call him) lived in a poetical atmosphere. He probably had the good fortune to ferry Shakspere from Whitehall to Paris Garden; he boasts of his acquaintance with Ben Jonson; and the cause of his great quarrel with Fennor is thus set forth: "Be it known unto all men, that I, John Taylor, waterman, did agree with William Fennor (who arrogantly and falsely entitles himself the King's Majesty's Rhyming Poet) to answer me at a trial of wit, on the 7th of October last, 1614, at the Hope Stage on the Bank-side; . . . . . and when the day came that the play should have been performed, the house being filled with a great audience who had all spent their money extraordinarily, then this companion for an ass ran away and left me for a fool, amongst thousands of critical censurers." Taylor had taken his waterman's position in a spot where there was a thriving trade. The Bankside was the landing-place to which the inhabitants of Westminster, and of the Strand, and of London west of Paul's, would daily throng in the days of the Drama's glory; when the Globe could boast of the highest of the land amongst its visitors; when Essex and Southampton, out of favour at court, repaired thither to listen, unsatiated, to the lessons of the great master of philosophy; when crowds of earnest people, not intent only upon amusement, went there to study their country's history, or learn the "humanities" in a school where the poet could dare to proclaim universal truths in an age of individual dissimulation; and when even the idle profligate might for a moment forget his habits of self-indulgence, and be roused into sympathy with his fellows, by the art which then triumphed, and still triumphs, over all competition. Other places of amusement were on the Bankside—the Paris

[Palace Yard Stairs, 1641.]

Garden, the Rose, and the Hope playhouses; and in earlier times, and even when the drama had reached its highest point of popular attraction, on the same spot were the "Bear-houses"—places of resort not only for the rude multitude, but to which Elizabeth carried the French ambassador to exhibit the courage of English bull-dogs. Imagine Southwark, the peculiar ground of summer theatres and *circi*, with no bridge but that of London, and we may easily understand that John Taylor sang the praises of the river with his whole heart:—

> "But noble Thames, whilst I can hold a pen,
> I will divulge thy glory unto men:
> Thou in the morning, when my coin is scant,
> Before the evening doth supply my want."*

But the empire of the watermen was destined to be invaded; and its enemies approached to its conquest, after the Tartarian fashion, with mighty chariots crowded with multitudes. Taylor was not slow to complain of this change. In his 'Thief,' published in 1622, he tells us that,

> "When Queen Elizabeth came to the crown,
> *A coach in England then was scarcely known;*"

and he adds, "'tis not fit" that

> "Fulsome madams, and new scurvy squires,
> Should jolt the streets at pomp, at their desires,
> Like great triumphant Tamburlaines, each day,
> Drawn with the pamper'd jades of Belgia,
> That almost all the streets are chok'd outright,
> Where men can hardly pass, from morn till night,
> Whilst watermen want work."

In a prose tract, published in the following year, Taylor goes forth to the attack upon "coaches" with great vehemence, but with a conviction that his warfare will not be successful: "I do not inveigh against any coaches that belong to persons of worth or quality, but only against the caterpillar swarm of hirelings. *They have undone my poor trade*, whereof I am a member; and though I look for no reformation, yet I expect the benefit of an old proverb, 'Give the losers leave to speak.'"† He maintains that "this infernal swarm of trade-spillers (coaches) have so overrun the land that we can get no living upon the water; for I dare truly affirm that every day in any term, especially if the court be at Whitehall, they do rob us of our livings, and carry five hundred sixty fares daily from us." This is a very exact computation, formed perhaps upon personal enumeration of the number of hired coaches passing to Westminster. He naturally enough contrasts the quiet of his own highway with the turmoil of the land-thoroughfare: "I pray you look into the streets, and the chambers or lodgings in Fleet Street or the Strand, how they are pestered with them (coaches), especially after a mask or a play at the court, where even the very earth quakes and trembles, the casements shatter, tatter, and clatter, and such a confused noise is made, so that a man can neither sleep, speak, hear, write, or eat his dinner or supper quiet for them." The history of this innovation we shall have to recount in a future paper. The irruption of coaches must have been as fearful a calamity to John Taylor and his fraternity in those days, as the establishment of railroads has been to postmasters and postboys in our own. These transitions diminish

* Praise of Hemp-seed. † The World runs on Wheels.

something of the pleasure with which we must ever contemplate a state of progress; but the evil is temporary and the good is permanent, and when we look back upon the past we learn to estimate the evil and the good upon broad principles. Half-a-century hence, a London without railroads, that inns and stages might be maintained, would appear as ludicrous a notion as that of a London without carriages, that John Taylor might row his wherry in prosperity, gladdened every day by the smiles of ladies, "whose ancient lodgings were near St. Katharine's, the Bankside, Lambeth Marsh, Westminster, Whitefryars, Colcharbor, or any other place near the Thames, who were wont to take a boat and air themselves upon the water,"—and not have to complain that "every Gill Turntripe, Mistress Fumkins, Madam Polecat, and my Lady Trash, Froth the Tapster, Bill the Tailor, Lavender the Broker, Whiff the Tobacco-seller, with their companion trugs, must be coach'd to Saint Alban's, Burntwood, Hockley-in-the-hole, Croydon, Windsor, Uxbridge, and many other places."* Peace be to honest John Taylor. He was the prince of scullers; for he rowed in a wherry "that had endured near four years' pilgrimage," from London to York, on one occasion; made what he calls "a discovery by sea from London to Salisbury," on another voyage; and passed, "in a sculler's boat," from London to Hereford, on a third adventure. He never bated "one jot of heart or hope," and yet the coaches, and other evil accidents, drove him from his waterman's trade, and he finished his eccentric career as a victualler at Oxford, writing against sectaries and schismatics, and filling bumpers to prerogative, on to a good old age.

The revolutions of half-a-century made wonderful changes in the aspect of the Thames. The Restoration found the famous old theatres swept away, and the ancient mansions towards the east invaded by the traders. Wharfs took the place of trim gardens; and if the nobleman still kept his state-boat, the dirty coal-barge was anchored by its side. D'Avenant has given a description of this state of things, which he puts into the mouth of a Frenchman:—

"You would think me a malicious traveller if I should still gaze on your misshapen streets and take no notice of the beauty of your river; therefore I will pass the importunate noise of your watermen (who snatch at fares as if they were to catch prisoners, plying the gentry so uncivilly, as if they never had rowed any other passengers but bear-wards), and now step into one of your peascod-boats, whose tilts are not so sumptuous as the roofs of *gondolas*, nor, when you are within, are you at the ease of *chaise à bras*. The commodity and trade of your river belongs to yourselves; but give a stranger leave to share in the pleasure of it, which will hardly be in the prospect or freedom of air; unless prospect, consisting of variety, be made up with here a palace, there a wood-yard, here a garden, there a brewhouse; here dwells a lord, there a dyer, and between both *duomo comune*. If freedom of air be inferred in the liberty of the subject, where every private man hath authority, for his own profit, to smoke up a magistrate, then the air of your Thames is open enough, because 'tis equally free."†

It is easy to perceive that during the progress of these changes—all indicating the advance of the middle classes, and the general extension of public accommodation and individual comfort—the river was every day becoming less and less a general highway for passengers. The streets from Westminster to St. Paul's

* The World runs on Wheels, Works, p. 238.

† Entertainment at Rutland House, D'Avenant's Works, 1673, p. 352.

were paved, after a fashion; the foot-passenger could make his way, though with some danger and difficulty; and the coach, though sometimes stuck in a hole, and sometimes rudely jostled by the brewer's cart, *did* progress through the Strand and Holborn. But the time was approaching when the great capital would find out that one bridge was somewhat insufficient, and that ferries and wherries were uncertain and inconvenient modes of passage from one shore to another. Westminster Bridge was finished about 1750. In sixty or seventy years later, London could number six bridges, the noblest structures of the modern world. Alas, for the watermen! They were a cheerful race, and Dogget did a wise thing when he endowed the river with his annual coat and badge. But they have gradually dwindled—and where are they now? They are not even wanted for the small commerce of the Thames. Steam-vessels bring every possible variety of lading up the river, where formerly the little hoys had their share of a coasting-trade; and the market-cart has entirely appropriated to itself the vegetable burthens of Covent-garden. Steele has given us a lively description of a boat-trip from Richmond in an early summer-morning, when he "fell in with a fleet of gardeners." . . . . "Nothing remarkable happened in our voyage; but I landed with ten sail of apricock-boats at Strand bridge, after having put in at Nine Elms, and taken in melons."* Things are changed.

Howel, amongst his enumeration of the attractions of the city, says, "What variety of bowling-alleys there are!" And when the idler was tired of this sport, and would turn his back even upon shuffle-board and cock-fighting, he had nothing to do but to step down to Queenhithe or the Temple, and have an afternoon of such recreation as can now only be found at a distance of five miles from London Bridge. "Go to the river," continues Howel; "what a pleasure it is to go thereon in the summer-time, in boat or barge! or to go a floundering among the fishermen!" Imagine a waterman, in these our days of his decay, tired of waiting for a fare at Westminster, strike out into the mid-stream with his draw-net! What a hooting would there be from Blackwall to Chelsea! Or conceive an angler, stuck under one of the piers of Waterloo Bridge, patiently expecting to be rewarded with a salmon, or at least a barbel. Yet such things were a century ago. There are minute regulations of the "Company of Free Fishermen" to be observed in the western parts of the Thames, which clearly show that the preservation of the fish, even in the highway between London and Westminster, was a matter of importance; and very stringent, therefore, are the restrictions against using eel-spears, and wheels, and "angle-rods with more than two hooks."† There is a distinct provision that fishermen were not to come nearer London Bridge than the Old Swan on the north bank, and St. Mary Overies on the south. Especially was enactment made that no person should "bend over any net, during the time of flood, whereby both *salmons*, and other kind of fish, may be hindered from swimming upwards." Woe for the anglers! The salmons and the swans have both quitted the bills of mortality; and they are gone where there are clear runnels, and pebbly bottoms, and quiet nooks under shadowing osiers, and where the water-lily spreads its broad leaf and its snowy flower, and the sewer empties not itself to pollute every tide, and the never-ceasing din of human life is heard not, and the paddle of the steam-boat dashes no wave upon the shore.

* Spectator, No. 404.

† Stow's London, book v.

We have seen a Frenchman's description of our Thames as a highway; and it may be well to look at the same author's picture, in the character of an Englishman, of the Seine, and its conveyances:—

"I find your boats much after the pleasant shape of those at common ferries; where your *bastelier* is not so turbulently active as our watermen, but rather (his fare being two brass *liards*) stands as sullen as an old Dutch skipper after shipwreck, and will have me attend till the rest of the herd make up his freight; passing in droves like cattle; embroidered and perfumed, with carters and *crocheteurs;* all standing during the voyage, as if we were ready to land as soon as we put from the shore; and with his long pole gives us a tedious waft, as if he were all the while poching for eels. We neither descend by stairs when we come in, nor ascend when we go out, but crawl through the mud like cray-fish, or anglers in a new plantation." * London, at all periods, could exhibit better accommodation than this; though D'Avenant's Frenchman complains of the landing at "Puddledock." But we select the description, to contrast the Parisian passage-boat of 1660 with the London steamer of 1841. Our readers will kindly accompany us on a quarter of an hour's voyage from the Shades Pier to Hungerford Market.

We have stood for a few minutes on the eastern side of London Bridge, looking upon that sight which arrests even the dullest imagination—mast upon mast, stretching farther than the eye can reach, the individual objects constantly shifting, but the aggregate ever the same. We pass to the western side, and descend the steps of the bridge. We are in a narrow and dirty street, and we look up to the magnificent land-arch which crosses it. A turn to the left brings us to the river. A bell is ringing; we pass through a toll-gate, paying four-pence, and in a few seconds are on board one of the little steam-boats, bearing the poetical name of some flower, or planet, or precious gem. As the hand of the clock upon the pier approaches to one of the four divisions of the hour, the boat prepares to start. The pilot goes to the helm; the broad plank over which the passengers have passed into the boat is removed; the cable by which it is attached to the pier, or to some other boat, is cast off. The steam is up. For a minute we appear as if we were passing down the river; but, threading its way through a dozen other steam-winged vessels, the boat darts towards the Surrey shore; and her prow is breasting the ebbing tide. What a gorgeous scene is now before us! The evening sun is painting the waters with glancing flames; the cross upon the summit of that mighty dome of St. Paul's shines like another sun; churches, warehouses, steam-chimneys, shot-towers, wharfs, bridges—the noblest and the humblest things—all are picturesque; and the eye, looking upon the mass, sees nothing of that meanness with which our Thames banks have been reproached. In truth, this juxtaposition of the magnificent and the common fills the mind with as much food for thought as if from London Bridge to Westminster there was one splendid quay, curtaining the sheds, and coal-barges, and time-worn landings which meet us at every glance. The ceaseless activity with which these objects are associated renders them even separately interesting. We see the goings-on of that enormous traffic which makes London what it is; and whilst we rush under the mighty arches of the iron bridge, and behold another, and another,

* Entertainment at Rutland House, p. 356.

and another spanning the river, looking as vast and solid as if they defied time and the elements; and also see the wharfs on the one bank, although the light be waning, still populous and busy,—and the foundries, and glass-houses, and printing-offices, on the other bank, still sending out their dense smoke,—we know that without this never-tiring energy, disagreeable as are some of its outward forms, the splendour which is around us could not have been. But the boat stops. Without bustle, some twenty passengers leave us at Blackfriars Bridge, and as many come on board. The operation is finished in a minute or two. We are again on our way. We still see the admixture of the beautiful and the mean, but in another form. The dirty Whitefriars is the neighbour of the trim Temple. Praised be the venerable Law which has left us one green spot, where trees still grow by our river-side, and which still preserves some relics of the days that are gone! Another bridge, perhaps the noblest, is again passed; and the turrets and pinnacles of Westminster are spread before us, with the smart modern mansions that have succeeded the old palatial grandeur of the seventeenth century. The sight is not displeasing, when we reflect that the ground upon which once stood some dozen vast piles, half house and half fortress, is now covered with hundreds of moderate-sized dwellings, filled with comforts and even luxuries unknown to the days of rushes and tapestry, into whose true sanctuaries no force can intrude, and where, if there be peace within, there is no danger of happiness being disturbed by violence without. But we are at Hungerford-wharf. The greater portion of the freight is discharged, ourselves amongst the number. The boat darts through Westminster Bridge, and farther onward to Vauxhall; and in another hour some of its passengers are miles on the road to Southampton. We are in the Strand as the gas-lights are peeping; and we are thinking of what the Strand is, and what it was.

[London and Westminster Steamers—Hungerford Stairs.]

["The foot grows black that was with dirt embrown'd."]

II.—CLEAN YOUR HONOUR'S SHOES.

In one of the many courts on the north side of Fleet Street, might be seen, somewhere about the year 1820, *the last of the shoe-blacks*. One would think that he deemed himself dedicated to his profession by Nature, for he was a Negro. At the earliest dawn he crept forth from his neighbouring lodging, and planted his tripod on the quiet pavement, where he patiently stood till noon was past. He was a short, large-headed, son of Africa, subject, as it would appear, to considerable variations of spirits, alternating between depression and excitement, as the gains of the day presented to him the chance of having a few pence to recreate himself, beyond what he should carry home to his wife and children. For he had a wife and children, this last representative of a falling trade; and two or three little woolly-headed *décrotteurs* nestled around him when he was idle, or assisted in taking off the roughest of the dirt when he had more than one client. He watched, with a melancholy eye, the gradual improvement of the streets; for during some twenty or thirty years he had beheld all the world combining to ruin him. He saw the foot-pavements widening; the large flag-stones carefully laid down; the loose and broken piece, which discharged a slushy shower on the unwary foot, instantly removed: he saw the kennels diligently cleansed, and the drains widened: he saw experiment upon experiment made in the repair of the carriage-way, and the holes, which were to him as the "old familiar faces" which he loved, filled up with a haste that appeared quite unnecessary, if not insulting. One solitary country shopkeeper, who had come to London once a year during a long life, clung to our sable friend; for he was the only one of the fraternity that he could find remaining, in his walk from Charing Cross to Cheapside. The summer's morning when that good man planted his foot on the three-legged stool, and desired him carefully to turn back his brown gaiters, and asked,

him how trade went with him, and shook his head when he learned that it was very bad, and they both agreed that new-fangled ways were the ruin of the country—that was a joyful occasion to him, for he felt that he was not quite deserted. He did not continue long to struggle with the capricious world.

"One morn we miss'd him on th' accustom'd *stand*."

He retired into the workhouse; and his boys, having a keener eye than their father to the wants of the community, took up the trade which he most hated, and applied themselves to the diligent removal of the mud in an earlier stage of its accumulation—they swept crossings, instead of cleaning shoes.

The last of the Shoe-blacks belongs to history. He was one of the living monuments of *old* London; he was a link between three or four generations. The stand which he *purchased* in Bolt Court (in the wonderful resemblance of external appearance between all these Fleet Street courts, we cannot be sure that it was *Bolt* Court) had been handed down from one successor to another, with as absolute a line of customers as Child's Banking-house. He belonged to a trade which has its literary memorials. In 1754, the polite Chesterfield, and the witty Walpole, felt it no degradation to the work over which they presided that it should be jocose about his fraternity, and hold that his profession was more dignified than that of the author:

"Far be it from me, or any of my brother authors, to intend lowering the dignity of the gentlemen trading in black ball, by naming them with ourselves: we are extremely sensible of the great distance there is between us: and it is with envy that we look up to the occupation of shoe-cleaning, while we lament the severity of our fortune, in being sentenced to the drudgery of a less respectable employment. But while we are unhappily excluded from the stool and brush, it is surely a very hard case that the contempt of the world should pursue us, only because we are unfortunate."*

Gay makes "the black youth"—his mythological descent from the goddess of mud, and his importance in a muddy city—the subject of the longest episode in his amusing Trivia. The shoe-boy's mother thus addresses him:

"Go thrive: at some frequented corner stand;
This brush I give thee, grasp it in thy hand;
Temper the foot within this vase of oil,
And let the little tripod aid thy toil;
On this methinks I see the walking crew,
At thy request, support the miry shoe;
The foot grows black that was with dirt embrown'd,
And in thy pocket gingling halfpence sound.
The goddess plunges swift beneath the flood,
And dashes all around her showers of mud:
The youth straight chose his post; the labour ply'd
Where branching streets from Charing Cross divide;
His treble voice resounds along the Mews,
And Whitehall echoes—'Clean your Honour's shoes!'"

The cry is no more heard. The pavements of Whitehall are more evenly laid than the ancient marble courts of York Place, where Wolsey held his state, and Henry revelled; and they are far cleaner, even in the most inauspicious weather,

* The World, No. 57.

than the old floor beneath the rushes. Broad as the footways are—as the broadest of the entire original streets—the mightiest of paving stones is not large enough for the comforts of the walker; and a pavement without a joint is sought for in the new concrete of asphaltum. Where the streets which run off from the great thoroughfares are narrow, the *trottoir* is widened at the expense of the carriage-road; and one cart only can pass at a time, so that we walk fearless of wheels. If we would cross a road, there is a public servant, ever assiduous, because the measure of his usefulness is that of his reward, who removes every particle of dirt from before our steps. No filth encumbers the kennels; no spout discharges the shower in a torrent from the house-top. We pass quietly onwards from the Horse Guards to the India House without being jostled off the curb-stone, though we have no protecting posts to sustain us; and we perceive why the last of the shoe-blacks vanished from our view about the time when we first noticed his active brothers at every corner of Paris—a city then somewhat more filthy than the London of the days of Anne.

He who would see London well must be a pedestrian. Gay, who has left us the most exact as well as the most lively picture of the external London of a hundred and twenty years ago, is enthusiastic in his preference for walking:

> "Let others in the jolting coach confide,
> Or in the leaky boat the Thames divide,
> Or, box'd within the chair, contemn the street,
> And trust their safety to another's feet:
> Still let me walk."

But what a walk has he described! He sets out, as what sensible man would not, with his feet protected with "firm, well-hammer'd soles;" but if the shoe be too big,

> "Each stone will wrench th' unwary step aside"

This, we see, is a London without *trottoirs*. The middle of a paved street was generally occupied with the channel; and the sides of the carriage-way were full of absolute holes, where the ricketty coach was often stuck as in a quagmire. Some of the leading streets, even to the time of George II., were almost as impassable as the avenues of a new American town. The only road to the Houses of Parliament before 1750 was through King Street and Union Street, "which were in so miserable a state, that fagots were thrown into the ruts on the days on which the King went to Parliament, to render the passage of the state-coach more easy."* The present Saint Margaret's *Street* was formed out of a thoroughfare known as Saint Margaret's *Lane*, which was so narrow that "pales were obliged to be placed, four feet high, between the foot-path and coach-road, to preserve the passengers from injury, and from being covered with the mud which was splashed on all sides in abundance."† The pales here preserved the passengers more effectually than the posts of other thoroughfares. These posts, in the principal avenues, constituted the only distinction between the foot-way and carriage-way; for the space within the posts was as uneven as the space without. This inner space was sometimes so narrow that only one person could pass at a time; and hence those contests for the wall that filled the streets with the vociferations of anger, and the din of assaulting sticks, and sometimes the clash of

* Smith's Westminster, p. 261. † Id. p. 262.

naked steel. Dr. Johnson describes how those quarrels were common when he first came to London; and how at length things were better ordered. But the change must in great part be imputed to the gradual improvement of the streets. In Gay's time there was no safety but within the posts.

> "Though expedition bids, yet never stray
> Where no ranged posts defend the rugged way;
> Here laden carts with thundering waggons meet,
> Wheels clash with wheels, and bar the narrow street."

In wet and gusty weather the unhappy walker heard the crazy signs swinging over his head, as Gulliver describes the Red Lion of Brentford. The spouts of every house were streaming at his feet, or drenching his laced hat and his powdered wig with unpitying torrents. At every step some bulk or shop-projection narrowed the narrow road, and drove him against the coach-wheels. The chairmen, if there was room to pass, occupied all the space between the wall and the posts. The "hooded maid" came sometimes gingerly along, with pattens and umbrella (then exclusively used by women), and of courtesy he must *yield* the wall. The small-coal man, and the sweep, and the barber, *took* the wall, in assertion of their clothes-soiling prerogative; and the bully thrust him, or was himself thrust, "to the muddy kennel's side." The great rule for the pedestrian was,—

> "Ever be watchful to maintain the wall."

The dignity of the wall, and its inconveniences, were as old as the time of James and Charles. Donne, in his first Satire, describes the difficulties of one who took the wall:—

> "Now we are in the street; he first of all,
> Improvidently proud, creeps to the wall,
> And so, imprisoned and hemmed in by me,
> Sells for a little state his liberty."

The streets, in the good old times, often presented obstructions to the pedestrian which appear to us like the wonders of some unknown region. In the more recent unhappy days of public executions the wayfarer passed up Ludgate Hill with an eye averted from the Old Bailey; for there, as Monday morning came, duly hung some three, and it may be six, unhappy victims of a merciless code, judicially murdered according to our better notions. Then was the rush to see the horrid sight, and the dense crowd pouring away from it; and the pickpocket active under the gallows; and the business of life interrupted for a quarter of an hour, with little emotion even amongst the steady walkers who heeded not the spectacle: it was a thing of course. And so was the pillory in earlier times. Gay says nothing of the feelings of the passer-on; he had only to take care of his clothes:

> "Where, elevated o'er the gaping crowd,
> Clasp'd in the board the perjur'd head is bow'd,
> Betimes retreat; here, thick as hailstones pour,
> Turnips and half-hatch'd eggs, a mingled shower,
> Among the rabble rain: some random throw
> May with the trickling yolk thy cheek o'erflow."

People used to talk of these things as coolly as Garrard wrote to Lord Strafford of them: "No mercy showed to Prynne; he stood in the pillory, and lost his first ear in a pillory in the palace at Westminster in full term; his other in Cheap-

side, where, while he stood, his volumes were burnt under his nose, which had almost suffocated him."* The cruelty is not mitigated by the subsequent account of Garrard, that Mr. Prynne "hath got his ears sewed on, that they grow again, as before, to his head."† If the mob round the pillory was safely passed, there was another mob often to be encountered. Rushing along Cheapside, or Covent Garden, or by the Maypole in the Strand, came the foot-ball players. It is scarcely conceivable, when London had settled into civilization, little more than a century ago,—when we had our famed Augustan age of Addisons and Popes,—when laced coats, and flowing wigs, and silver buckles, ventured into the streets, and the beau prided himself on

"The nice conduct of a clouded cane,—"

that the great thoroughfares through which men now move, "intent on high designs," should be a field for foot-ball:

"The prentice quits his shop to join the crew;
Increasing crowds the flying game pursue."‡

This is no poetical fiction. It was the same immediately after the Restoration. D'Avenant's Frenchman thus complains of the streets of London:

"I would now make a safe retreat, but that methinks I am stopped by one of

[Foot-Ball in the Strand.]

your heroic games, called foot-ball; which I conceive (under your favour) not very conveniently civil in the streets; especially in such irregular and narrow roads

* Strafford's Letters, vol. i. p. 261. † Id. p. 266. ‡ Trivia.

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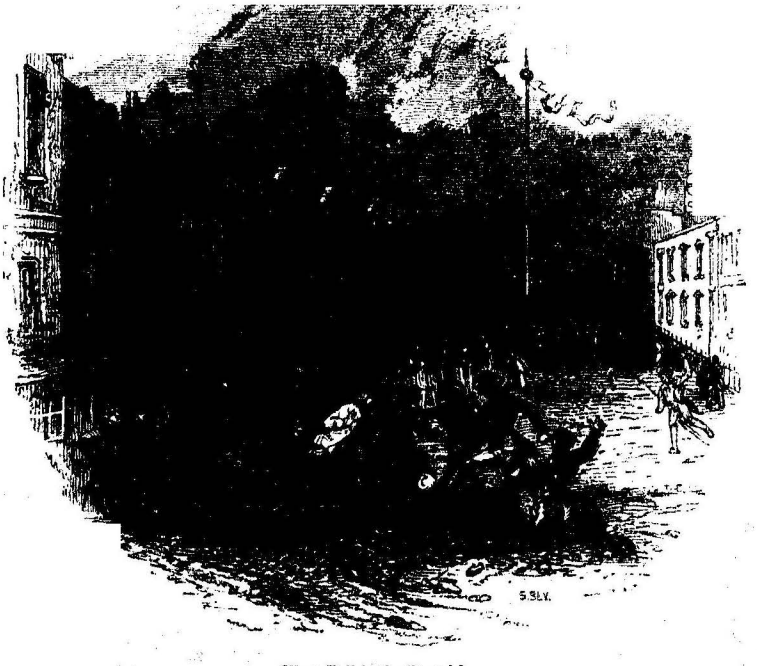

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as Crooked-lane. Yet it argues your courage, much like your military pastime of throwing at cocks. But your mettle would be more magnified (since you have long allowed those two valiant exercises in the streets) to draw your archers from Finsbury, and, during high market, let them shoot at butts in Cheapside." *

It was the same in the days of Elizabeth. To this game went the sturdy apprentices, with all the train of idlers in a motley population; and when their blood was up, as it generally was in this exercise, which Stubbes calls "a bloody and murthering practice, rather than a fellowly sport or pastime," they had little heed to the passengers in the streets, whether there was passing by

"a velvet justice with a long
Great train of blue-coats, twelve or fourteen strong;"

or a gentle lady on her palfrey, wearing her "visor made of velvet." ‡ The courtier, described in Hall, had an awful chance to save his "perewinke" in such an encounter; when with his "bonnet vail'd," according to the "courtesies" of his time,

"Travelling along in London way,"

he has to recover his "auburn locks" from the "ditch" that crosses the thoroughfare.

The days we are noticing were not those of pedestrians. The "red-heel'd shoes" of the time of Anne were as little suited for walking, as the "pantofles" of Elizabeth, "whereof some be of white leather, some of black, and some of red; some of black velvet, some of white, some of red, some of green, rayed, carved, cut, and stitched all over with silk, and laid on with gold, silver, and such like." So Stubbes describes the "corked shoes" of his day; and he adds, what seems very apparent, "to go abroad in them as they are now used altogether, is rather a let or hindrance to a man than otherwise." § These fine shoes belonged to the transition state between the horse and the coach; when men were becoming "effeminate" in the use of the new vehicles, which we have seen the Water-Poet denounced; and the highways of London were not quite suited to the walker. Shoes such as those are ridiculed by Stubbes as "uneasy to go in;" and he adds, "they exagerate a mountain of mire, and gather a heap of clay and baggage together."

In asking our readers to look back to the period when London was without *coaches*—when no sound of wheels was heard but that of the *cart*, labouring through the rutty ways, with its load of fire-wood, or beer, or perhaps the king's pots and pans travelling from Westminster to Greenwich—we ask them to exercise a considerable power of imagination. Yet London had no coaches till late in the reign of Elizabeth; and they can scarcely be said to have come into general use till the accession of James. Those who were called by business or pleasure to travel long distances in London, which could not be easily reached by water-conveyance, rode on horses. For several centuries the rich citizens and the courtiers were equestrians. All the records of early pageantry tell us of the magnificence of horsemen. Froissart saw the coronation of Henry IV., and he thus describes the progress of the triumphant Bolingbroke through the city:—"And

* Entertainment at Rutland House. † Donne. ‡ Stubbes.
§ Anatomy of Abuses.

after dinner the duke departed from the Tower to Westminster, and rode all the way bareheaded; and about his neck the livery of France. He was accompanied with the prince his son, and six dukes, six earls, and eighteen barons, and in all, knights and squires, nine hundred horse. Then the king had on a short coat of cloth of gold, after the manner of Almayne, and he was mounted on a white courser, and the garter on his left leg. Thus the duke rode through London with a great number of lords, every lord's servant in their master's livery; all the burgesses and Lombard merchants in London, and every craft with their livery and device. Thus he was conveyed to Westminster. He was in number *six thousand horse*."* The old English chroniclers revel in these descriptions. They paint for us, in the most vivid colours, the entry into London of the conqueror of Agincourt; they are most circumstantial in their relations of the welcome of his unhappy son, after the boy had been crowned at Paris, with the king riding amidst flowing conduits, and artificial trees and flowers, and virgins making "heavenly melody," and bishops "in pontificalibus;" and having made his oblations at the cathedral, "he took again his steed at the west door of Paul's, and so rode forth to West-

[From an illumination, Harl. MSS., 2278.—Temp. Henry VI.]

minster."† By the ancient "order of crowning the kings and queens of England," it is prescribed that, "the day before the coronation, the king should come from the Tower of London to his palace at Westminster, through the midst of the city, mounted on a horse, handsomely habited, and bare-headed, in the sight of all the people."‡ The citizens were familiar with these splendid equestrian processions, from the earliest times to the era of coaches; and they hung their wooden houses with gay tapestry, and their wives and daughters sate in their most costly dresses in the balconies, and shouts rent the air, and they forgot for a short time that there was little security for life or property against the despot of the hour. They played at these pageants, as they still play, upon a smaller scale themselves; and the Lord Mayor's horse and henchmen were seen on all solemn occasions of

* Lord Berners' Froissart.

† Fabyan. ‡ Liber Regalis, quoted by Strutt in his Manners, vol. iii. p. 422.

marching-watches and Bartholomew fairs. The city-dignitaries seldom ride now; although each new sheriff has a horse-block presented to him at his inauguration, that he may climb into the saddle as beseems his gravity. The courtiers kept to their riding processions, down almost to the days of the great civil war; perhaps as a sort of faint shadow of the chivalry that was gone. Garrard tells us, in 1635, how the Duke of Northumberland rode to his installation as a knight of the garter at Windsor, with earls, and marquises, and almost all the young nobility, and many barons, and a competent number of the gentry, near a hundred horse in all.* The era of coaches and chairs was then arrived; but the Duke of Northumberland did not hold that they belonged to knighthood. Fifty years earlier coaches were shunned as "effeminate." Aubrey, in his short memoir of Sir Philip Sidney, describes the feeling about coaches in the days of Elizabeth: "I have heard Dr. Pell say that he has been told by ancient gentlemen of those days of Sir Philip, so famous for men-at-arms, that 'twas then held as great a disgrace for a young gentleman to be seen riding in the street in a coach, as it would now for such a one to be seen in the streets in a petticoat and waistcoat; so much is the fashion of the times now altered."† Our friend the Water-Poet looks back upon that to him golden age with a similar feeling.

Nor was the use of saddle-horses confined to men in the early days. Chaucer thus describes his 'Wife of Bath:'—

> "Upon an ambler easily she sat,
> Ywimpled well, and on her head a hat,
> As broad as is a buckler or a targe,
> A foot-mantle about her hippés large,
> And on her feet a pair of spurrés sharp."

When Katharine of Spain came over in 1501 to marry Prince Arthur, a horse was provided for her conveyance from the Tower to Saint Paul's, upon which she was to ride "with the *pillion* behind a lord to be named by the king;" but it was also ordered that "eleven *palfreys* in one suit be ordained for such ladies attending upon the said princess as shall follow next unto the said pillion."‡ The great ladies long after this rode on horseback on ordinary occasions. Elizabeth commissioned Sir Thomas Gresham to purchase a horse at Antwerp; and the merchant-prince writes to Cecil in 1560:—"the Queen's Majesty's Turkey horse doth begin to mend in his feet and body; which doubtless is one of the readiest horses that is in all Christendom, and runs the best."§ Of poor Mary of Scotland, the Earl of Shrewsbury, after conveying her to Buxton, writes to Cecil in 1580:—"She had a hard beginning of her journey; for when she should have taken her horse, he started aside, and therewith she fell, and hurt her back, which she still complains of, notwithstanding she applies the bath once or twice a day."‖ The "horse-litter" appears to have formed a connecting link between the saddle and the coach. When Margaret, daughter of Henry VII., set forward for Scotland, she rode on a "fair palfrey;" but after her was "conveyed by two footmen one very rich litter, borne by two fair coursers very nobly drest, in the which litter the said queen was borne on the entering of the good towns, or otherwise to her good pleasure."¶ The litter was, as we here see, a vehicle of ceremony. Hall

* Strafford's Letters, vol. i., p. 427. † Lives, p. 554
‡ Harl. MS., quoted in Northumberland Household Book, p. 449.
§ Burgon's Life of Gresham, vol. i. p. 309. ‖ Lodge's Illustrations, vol. ii. p. 239.
¶ Leland's Collectanea, quoted in Markland's valuable paper on the early use of carriages, Archæologia, vol. xx. p. 447.