VARIOUS

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TOWN-HALL, LIVERPOOL

From a small inconsiderable hamlet, Liverpool, within a century and a half, has been singularly advanced in national importance. In Leland's time it had only a chapel, its parish church being at Walton, a distance of four miles from the town.

In the year 1571 the inhabitants of Liverpool sent a memorial to Queen Elizabeth, praying relief from a subsidy which they thought themselves unable to bear, wherein they styled themselves "*her majesty's poor decayed town of Liverpool*." Some time towards the close of this reign, Henry, Earl of Derby, in his way to the Isle of Man, staid at his house at Liverpool called the Tower; at which the corporation erected a handsome hall or seat for him in the church, where he honoured them several times with his presence.

Liverpool, from this time till the end of the next century, made but a slow progress either in the extent of its trade or in the number of its inhabitants; nor is there any remarkable occurrence recorded of it, except the siege of it by Prince Rupert, in the civil wars in 1644; some traces of which were discovered, when the foundation of the Liverpool Infirmary was sunk, particularly the marks of the trenches thrown up by the prince, and some cartouches, &c. left behind by the besiegers.

About the year 1698 an act of parliament was obtained, empowering the inhabitants to build a new church. From that time may be traced the rapid progress of population and commerce, until Liverpool has now become second only to the metropolis of Great Britain.

In 1760 the inhabitants of Liverpool were computed at 25,787; in 1811, at 94,376; and in 1821, at 118,972!

Far as the eye can trace the prospect round
The splendid tracts of opulence are found;
Yet scarce a hundred annual rounds have run.
Since first the fabric of this power begun;
His noble stream, inglorious, Mersey roll'd,
Nor felt his waves by lab'ring art controll'd:
Along his side a few small cots were spread,
His finny brood their humble tenants fed;
At op'ning dawn with fraudful nets supply'd
The padding skiff would brave his specious tide,
Ply round the shores, nor tempt the dangerous main,

But seek ere night the friendly port again.

The public buildings in Liverpool are not numerous, but they are worthy of attention. The Town-Hall, which is the subject of our present embellishment, is in a striking style of architecture. The first stone of this structure was laid in 1749, and the hall was opened in 1754. It is an elegant stone building, having two fronts; one towards Castle-street, the other towards the area formed by the New Exchange Buildings. Each front consists of an elegant range of Corinthian columns, supporting a pediment, and are themselves supported by a rustic base. Between the capitals are heads, and emblems of commerce in basso-relievo; and on the pediment of the grand front is a noble piece of sculpture representing Commerce committing her treasures to the race of Neptune. The ground floor of this building was originally intended as an Exchange for the accommodation of the merchants, with insurance offices adjoining; but was never used for that purpose, the merchants prefering to meet in the open street opposite the building. Since its erection a considerable addition was made to it on the north side, and some progress towards extending and improving the rooms and offices within the building, when the fire in 1795 destroyed the whole of the interior. After this destructive accident the corporation determined to rebuild the interior upon a new and extended plan, and to appropriate the whole of the building to the purposes of judicial and other offices for the police of the town, a mansion

for the mayor, a suit of public assembly rooms, and for offices for the general corporation business. All the offices, rooms, and passages, on the basement and ground stories, are now arched with brick, as a security against any future fire.

The Exchange Buildings form three sides of a quadrangle, 194 feet by 180 in the clear space, with arcades or piazzas in front, and the whole is in a style of architecture corresponding with the north front of the Town-Hall and Old Exchange, which forms the fourth side of the square at the head of Castle-street. The east side of these buildings on the ground floor, contains a coffee-room, 94 feet by 52, with appropriate rooms and offices for the keeper, &c.; on the second story over the coffee-room, is a room for the under-writers, upon the principle of Lloyd's in London, 72 feet by 36: a second room, 69 feet by 29, with several other rooms attached to them. The north and west sides of these buildings are brokers' and merchants' offices, and counting houses. In the centre of the area is erected an elegant group of statues in commemoration of the heroic and immortal Nelson.

THE MONTHS

THE HOP HARVEST

The southern counties of England, particularly Surrey and Kent, now yield their valuable produce of hops in this month. The common hop, *humulus lupulus*, is propagated either by nursery plants or by cuttings. These are set in *hills*, formed by digging holes in the spring, which are filled with fine mould, and the number of which varies from 800 to 1,000, or 1,200 per acre. One, two, or three plants are put in each hill; but, if hops are designed to be raised from cuttings, four or five of these, from three to four inches in length, are planted and covered one inch deep with fine mould.

At the end of the first year it becomes necessary to put poles into the hills, round which the bines reared from plants are wound; at the expiration of the second year, full-sized poles, from 15 to 20 feet, are set, (though the hop-bines will run to the height of 50 feet,) in the proportion of two poles to each hill, and a similar number of hop-plants are fastened loosely round each pole, by means of withered rushes. Hops begin to flower about the latter end of June or the beginning of July. The poles are now entirely covered with verdure, and the pendent flowers appear

in clusters and light festoons. The hops, which are the scaly seed-vessels of the female plants, are, when the seed is formed, (generally about the end of August,) picked off by women and children; for this purpose the poles are taken up with the plants clinging to them. The seeds are then dried over a charcoal fire, exposed to the air for a few days, and packed in sacks and sent to market.

The culture of hops, though profitable when it succeeds, is very precarious: as soon as the plant appears above ground, it is attacked by an insect somewhat similar to the turnip-fly, which devours the young heads. Hop-gardens, situated on chalky soils, are peculiarly subject to its depredations. In the months of June and July, the hops are liable to be *blown* by a species of *aphis*, or fly. This insect, however, does not endanger the growth of the plant, unless it be in a weak state, in consequence of the depredations committed on its root by the larvae of the ottermoth, *phalaena humuli*.

The hop is a most valuable plant: in its wild state it is relished by cows, horses, goats, sheep, and swine. When cultivated, its young tops are eaten, early in the spring, as substitutes for asparagus, being wholesome and aperient. Its principal use, however, is in brewing malt liquors, communicating that fine bitter flavour to our beer, and making it keep for a longer time than it otherwise would do. Hops also serve some important purposes in medicine.

LINES TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING

Why does Britannia bend with pensive mien,
And throbbing bosom o'er that sable bier,
To which yon melancholy group is seen
In mute affliction slowly drawing near,
Whilst weeping genius, pointing to the sky,
In silent anguish heaves a plaintive sigh?

She seems to take a lingering last farewell,
As down her cheek the pearly teardrops flow,
Of some lamented spirit she lov'd well,
By Fate's inexorable shaft laid low;
And thus half broken-hearted to complain
"When shall we look upon thy like again!"

Poor drooping maid—she mourns the doom of one,
Whom at a time like this she ill can spare,—
Her talented and patriotic son,
Whom art could not deceive, nor vice ensnare,
To truth and sacred liberty allied,
His country's hope, her honour and her pride!

Yes—he is gone, whose energetic mind
Upheld the pillars of a mighty state;

Whose wisdom, worth, and eloquence, combin'd,
Earn'd the just tribute of the good and great,
Ensur'd a deathless wreath for coming days—
The poor man's blessing, and the rich one's praise!

Relentless Death!—could *no* one else suffice?
No less invaluable prize be found?
But must *he* fall a noble sacrifice
And early victim to thy fatal wound!
Thou stern and merciless destroyer, say,
Why didst thou blight his brief but glorious day?

It is not Albion only who deplores.—
All sympathising Europe wails his doom;
And bright-eyed Freedom hastes from Western shores
To drop a grateful tear upon his tomb;
And fondly hovering round his slumbering shade
Guards the lorn spot where her best friend is laid.

Now, stay my muse—for worthier hands than thine
Will twine the laurel round his hallow'd bust;
And raise in happier and more polish'd line
A splendid trophy to his sacred dust;
When thy untaught and unpretending lay
Shall be forgotten and have pass'd away.

Yet, ere thy chords are mute, oh, once again
My trembling lyre let me touch thy string!
And in a humble, but a heartfelt strain

Of him, the much-lov'd child of Genius sing;
And place this simple, unaffected verse,
With moisten'd eye upon his plumed hearse:—

"If all that virtue, all that fame holds dear,
Deserve a tribute—stop and pay it *here!*"

J.E.S.

THE SKETCH BOOK.
No. XLV

BEHIND THE SCENES; OR, A BREAKFAST IN NEWGATE

Returning from the country, I found myself in the Old Bailey, shortly after seven in the morning. I had some difficulty in making my way through the crowd there assembled, which I instantly perceived, from the platform erected in front of Newgate, had been brought together to witness one of those mournful exhibitions which the administration of criminal justice so frequently furnishes in this immense metropolis.

My first impulse was to retreat with all possible expedition, but the impediments opposed to my doing so compelled a pause; and it then struck me, that however reluctant to witness suffering, there was much in the scene before me on which a reflecting mind might dwell with interest, if not with advantage.

The decent gravity of some of the crowd formed a strong contrast to the jocund vivacity of the majority; and this again with the important swagger of the constables, who seemed fully to appreciate the consequence which the modicum of authority dealt out to persons of their standing in society cannot fail

to impart. Then the anxiety to complete their task, which the workmen who were still employed in preparing the scaffold evinced, gave another feature perfectly distinct from what had before caught my attention, while the eagerness of the inhabitant housekeepers to let "excellent places for seeing," and of certain ambulatory pastrycooks to accommodate the rapidly increasing multitude with such delicacies as they had for sale, added to the variety, though not to the solemnity of the scene.

Some undertaker's men were carrying coffins across the road to the prison, for the reception of the sufferers after execution. They were much pushed about, and this caused great mirth. I turned from the general display of levity with disgust. "On no account," I mentally exclaimed, "will I remain mixed up with such a herd of heartless beings. But who am I," I retorted on myself in the next moment, "that I should thus condemn my fellows, and 'bite the chain of nature?'"—for what I saw was nature after all. A mob, save when depressed by a sense of peril, can never long refrain from some indications of merriment, however awful the subject of their meeting. The unfortunate Hackman, in one of his letters to Miss Ray, described himself to have been shocked by a spectacle of this sort. On the morning of the day on which Dr. Dodd suffered, Hackman was at Tyburn. While the multitude were expecting the approach of the culprit, an unfortunate pig ran among them; and the writer remarks, with indignation, that the brutal populace diverted themselves with the animal's distress, as if they had come there to see "a sow baited,"

instead of attending to behold a fellow creature sacrificed to justice.

But the pressure of the accumulating thousands was too much for me, and I asked a female, who, with an infant in her arms, stood full in my way, to let me pass. I was retiring, when the carriage of one of the sheriffs drove up to the Sessions-house, and out stepped my friend Sir Thomas –, who, in the performance of his duty, came to superintend the last arrangements within the prison, and to give the governor a *receipt* for the bodies of the unfortunates who were to die.

I was instantly recognised, and the sheriff kindly complimented me with the offer of an introduction to the interior. Such politenesss was not to be withstood, and I signified my assent with a bow.

We passed up a staircase and into a well furnished and carpeted apartment. Here I was introduced to the under-sheriff, who, attended by half a dozen gentlemen, brought in, like myself, as a matter of favour, was about descending to the room in which the culprits are pinioned. Sir Thomas, who had bestowed much humane attention on the prisoners, inquired, with real solicitude, how they had passed the night. His colleague, who had just had his person embellished with the insignia of office, replied, in a lively tone. "O, very well, I understand." He added, with infinite coolness and intelligence—"But you cannot expect men to sleep so well the night before they are hanged as they are likely to do afterwards!"

He looked round in all our faces, as if to collect our suffrages in favour of this pleasantry. His *high rank* and importance *there*, prevented any word or sign of displeasure. Most of us lifted our upper lip so as just to show our teeth, thereby intimating that we knew he had said a very good thing, at which, but for the painful business then in progress, we should be ready to die with laughing.

We now followed the sheriffs through the Sessions-house, and thence, by a covered passage on the eastern side of the yard of that building, to the prison. I shuddered at beholding the numerous precautions which experience and ingenuity had suggested to cut off hope and prevent escape, Spikes and pallisades above, and doors of massy iron below, appeared in long and terrible array against the wretch, who, having eluded the vigilance of the officers of the gaol, should attempt, by flight, to save his life. At one of the iron doors, we were severally inspected with as much suspicious care as if we had been seeking to get out, instead of pressing forward to be let in.

At length we reached a gloomy apartment, which, I believe, is called the press-room. Here I found rather a fuller attendance than I had expected; some eight or ten persons having been admitted by another entrance. These had formed in two lines, and their eyes were incessantly turned towards the door. I fancied, when I made my appearance, that they regarded me with peculiar attention, as if for a moment they had mistaken me for a more distinguished character than I really was. If I were right in this,

they certainly were soon undeceived. Mingling with them, I looked about me, as I saw them look about. Silence generally prevailed. A few whispers were exchanged; and now and then such sentences as, "The time grows short"– "They will soon be here"—"What must their feelings be at this moment?" were murmured along the ranks.

That amelioration of the culprit's destiny, which, by relieving him from the galling fetters heretofore deemed necessary for the safe detention of his person, now leaves his mind more perfect leisure for communication with his Creator, had not then taken place. The approach of the prisoners was signified first by a whisper, and then by the clanking of the irons attached to the limbs of one of them. It was a dreary morning; and the sombre aspect of the apartment well accorded with the dismal preparations of which it was to be the theatre. A block with a small anvil was placed near the entrance, by which a miserably attired individual was stationed with a candle, for the purpose of lighting the workman who attended to remove the irons. The flame of the candle was too small to afford a general illumination of the room; but its limited power gave to the eye a more distinct view of a little circle round the anvil, in which the main objects were the smith, with his hammer already grasped; his assistant, and two or three officers, were, in the absence of the more important objects of curiosity, eagerly gazed on by some of the party, and by me for one, as appendages of the picture not unworthy of notice.

The sound of the fetters was now close at hand, and the voice of the minister who attended the wearer of them, could be heard. In the next moment two or three persons entered, and these were followed by the ordinary and one of the malefactors. The latter looked right and left, as if he had calculated on recognising there some friend or relative. A ghastly paleness sat on his cheek, and there was an air of disorder in the upper part of his face, which his wild but sunken eye, and negligently combed locks joined to furnish. The unhappy youth, for he was not more than twenty, advanced with a steady step to where the smith expected him. He was resigned and tractable. When about to place his foot on the block, he untied a band, which had passed round his body to sustain the weight of his irons; and as he disengaged it, he let it carelessly fall, with an expression in his countenance which told, so I fancied, that, in this moment, reflecting he should never want it again, the immediate cause and consequence of the miserable relief flashed full on his imagination, with all their concomitant horrors. But with calmness he attended to the workman, who directed him how to stand. He manifested great presence of mind, and, I thought, seemed to gaze with something of curiosity on the operation, which he contributed all in his power to facilitate. The heavy blows echoed through the room, and rudely broke in on the low murmurs and whispers which had for some little time been the only sounds heard there. A singularly irrational feeling came over me. I could have reproved the striker for indecorously breaking silence, and even

have questioned his humanity for being capable of such vigorous exertion at a moment when, as it struck me, everything ought to have presented the coldness and motionless stillness of the grave.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.