

VARIOUS

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Содержание

FISHMONGER'S HALL	4
HOLY SEPULCHRE, HECKINGTON CHURCH	11
TRAVELING NOTES IN SOUTH WALES	14
THE SKETCH-BOOK	16
MY FIRE	16
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	19

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FISHMONGER'S HALL



FISHMONGERS' HALL.



ARMS OF THE COMPANY.

These Cuts may be welcome illustrations of the olden magnificence of the City of London. The first represents the river or back front of the Hall of the Fishmongers' Company: the second cut, the arms of the Company, is added by way of an illustrative pendent. These insignia are placed over the entrance to the Hall in Lower Thames-street; they are sculptured in bold relief, and are not meanly executed. The Hall, or the greater part of it, has been taken down to make room for the New London

Bridge approaches; the frame-work of the door, and the arms still remain—*stat portus umbra*.

The Hall merits further notice; not so much for its architectural pretensions as for its being the commencement of a plan which it could be wished had been completed. The reader may probably remember that after the Great Fire of London, the King (Charles II.) desired WREN, in addition to his designs for St. Paul's, to make an accurate survey and drawing of the whole area and confines of the waste metropolis; and "day, succeeding day, amidst ashes and ruins, did this indefatigable man labour to fulfil his task." He prepared his plans for rebuilding the city, and laid them before the King. That part of Sir Christopher's plan which relates to the present subjects, was as follows: "By the water-side, from the bridge to the Temple, he had planned a long and broad wharf or quay, where he designed to have arranged all the halls that belong to the several companies of the city, with proper warehouses for merchants between, to vary the edifices, and make it at once one of the most beautiful ranges of structure in the world."¹ King Charles, however, as Mr. Cunningham observes, "was never obstinate in any thing for his country's good," and the idea was dropped: but Wren erected the above Hall as a specimen of his intention of ornamenting the banks of the Thames. The original hall was destroyed by the Great Fire.

The ancient importance of the Fishmongers' Company may

¹ Quoted by Cunningham in his "Life of Wren," from a contemporary authority.

be thus explained:—

During the days of papacy in England, fish was an article not of optional, but compulsive consumption, and this rendered the business of a fishmonger one of the principal trades of London. Fish Street Hill, and the immediate vicinity, was the great mart for this branch of traffic, from its close connexion with the river, and here lived many illustrious citizens, particularly Sir William Walworth, and Sir Stephen Fisher.

Strong prejudices were however entertained against the fishmongers, and to so great an extent was it carried, that in the fourteenth century, they prayed the king, by Nicholas Exton, one of their body, that he would take the company under his protection, "lest they might receive corporeal hurt." The parliament itself appears to have imbibed the general distrust, for in 1382 they enacted, "that no fishmonger should be mayor of the city." This was repealed, however, the following year.

The fishmongers consisted of two companies, the salt fishmongers, incorporated in 1433, and the stock fishmongers in 1509. The two companies were united by Henry VIII. in 1536. Before the junction, they are said by Stow, who calls them "jolly citizens," to have had six halls, two in Thames Street, two in Fish Street, and two in Old Fish Street, and six lord-mayors were elected from their body in twenty-four years. But being charged with forestalling, contrary to the laws and constitutions of the city, they were fined five hundred marks by Edward I. in 1290. In 1384, these, as well as others concerned in furnishing the city

with provisions, were put under the immediate direction of the mayor and aldermen, by an act of parliament still in force.²

The Hall, on the west side of the ward of Bridge Within, was of brick and stone, and may be said to have had two fronts. The fore entrance was from Thames Street by a handsome passage, leading into a large square court, encompassed by the Great Hall, the Court Room, and other grand apartments, with galleries. The back, or river front, had a double flight of stone steps, by which was an ascent to the first apartments. The door was ornamented with Ionic columns supporting an open pediment, in which was a shield, with the arms of the company. The building was finished with handsomely rusticated stone, and had a noble effect.

The Hall was of capacious proportions, and extended nearly the whole length of the building. The ceiling, as well as that of the adjoining Court Room, exhibited some fine specimens of old plaster-work. We witnessed the dismantling of the premises previous to their being taken down. It was indeed a sorry breaking up. The long tables which had so often, to use a hackneyed phrase, "groaned" beneath the weight of civic fare—the cosy high-backed stuffed chairs which had held many a portly citizen—nay, the very soup-kettles and venison dishes—all were to be submitted to the noisy ordeal of the auction hammer.

We remember in the upper end of the hall, and just behind the chair, there stood in a niche, a full-sized statue, carved in wood by Edward Pierce, statuary, of Sir William Walworth, a member of

² Wards of London.

this company, and lord-mayor during the rebellion of Wat Tyler. The knight grasped a real dagger, said to be the identical weapon with which he stabbed the rebel; though a publican of Islington pretended to be possessed of this dagger, and in 1731, lent it to be publicly exhibited in Smithfield, in a show called "Wat Tyler," during Bartholomew Fair. Below the niche was this inscription:

"Brave Walworth, knight, lord-mayor, yt slew
Rebellious Tyler in his alarms;
The king, therefore, did give in lieu
The dagger to the cytye's arms.
In the 4th year of Richard II. Anno Domini 1381."

A common, but erroneous belief is perpetuated in this inscription, for the dagger was in the city arms long before the time of Sir William Walworth, and was intended to represent the sword of St. Paul, the patron saint of the corporation.

The funeral pall of Sir W. Walworth curiously embroidered with gold, is preserved amongst the relics, as well as a plan of the splendid show at his installation, 1380.

The Fishmongers' Company is fourth upon the list of the city corporations, under the name and style of "the Wardens and Commonalty of the mystery of Fishmongers of the city of London." It is a livery company, and very rich, governed by a prime and five other wardens, and a court of assistants.

The company supports a free Grammar School at Holt Market, in Norfolk, founded by Sir John Gresham; Jesus

Hospital, at Bray, in Berkshire, founded by William Goddard, Esq. for forty poor persons; St. Peter's Hospital, near Newington, Surrey, founded by the company; twelve alms-houses at Harrietsham, in Kent, founded by Mr. Mark Quested; a fellowship in Sidney-Sussex College, Cambridge founded by Mr. Leonard Smith; a scholarship in the same college, founded by William Bennet, Esq. Mr. Smith, executor.

The *Arms* of the Company are in a shield supported by a merman and mermaid, the latter with a mirror in her hand. The Keys refer to St. Peter, the Patron Saint of the Company.

HOLY SEPULCHRE, HECKINGTON CHURCH

(To the Editor.)

From the description of the Holy Sepulchre in Heckington Church, given in your last volume, stating that it stood there in the summer of 1789, such of your readers as have no means of knowing to the contrary, may infer that it is not now in existence.³ I am led to trouble you with a few lines on the subject, as this specimen still in the best preservation, deserves us full an account as your limits will admit. The sepulchre nearly, and the stalls also mentioned by you, which have been cleaned completely, remain now in the same state as the artist originally left them. An architect, Mr. T. Rickman, who visited the neighbourhood a short time ago, gives the following account, which was printed in a work⁴ on the topography of the neighbourhood, soon after his visit: he says, "The sepulchre, of which there are not many specimens now remaining, consists of a series of richly

³ We omitted to state that our interesting particulars of the Heckington Sepulchre were from *Vetusta Monumenta*, a splendid folio work published by the Antiquarian Society.

⁴ Sketches of New and Old Sleaford, County of Lincoln, and of several places in the Neighbourhood, p. 224. 8vo Baldwin and Co.

ornamented niches, the largest of which represents the tomb, having angels standing beside it; the side niches have the Maries and other appropriate figures, and in the lower niches are the Roman soldiers reposing; these niches have rich canopies, and are separated by buttresses and rich finials, having all the spaces covered by very rich foliage." He further observes, that "the stalls exhibit a specimen of pure decorated work, as rich as the finest sculpture of foliage and small figures can render it, and hardly surpassed by any in the kingdom, and the sepulchre is of the same excellent character. The various small ornaments about these stalls and niches form one of the best possible studies for enrichments of this date: and it is almost peculiar to this church, that there is nothing about it, except what is quite modern, that is not of the same style of architecture."

As the above gentleman's description of the present state of the church at Heckington will give a clearer idea of many others in the county of Lincoln, we perhaps cannot do better than close this account with it. "This beautiful church, of pure decorated character, is one of the most perfect models in the kingdom, having, with one exception, (that of the groined or interior ceiling which is wanting, and appears never to have been prepared for,) every feature of a fine church, of one uniform style, without any admixture of *later* or *earlier* work. Its mutilations are comparatively small, consisting only in the destruction of the tracey of the north transept window, and some featherings in other windows, and the building and wall to enclose a vestry.

The plan of the church is a west tower and spire, nave and aisles, spacious transepts, and a large chancel, with a vestry attached to the north side. The nave has a well proportioned clesestory. There is a south porch, a rich font, the tomb of an ecclesiastic, and the assemblage of niches before described. In the chancel and some of the church walls are very good brackets. The vestry has a crypt below it. Fully to describe this church would require a much larger space than can be allotted to it, but it may be well to remark, that every part of the design and execution is of the very best character, equal to any in the kingdom."

That this church was built on or near to the site of the one given by Gilbert de Guant, the style of architecture being of much later date, fully demonstrates; and it is more than probable that on its rebuilding, the patent of Edward III. was obtained. Certain it is that no specimen of an earlier style now remains; but tradition says that the foundation of the church was laid in the year 1101, and the building completed in A.D. 1104, at a cost only of £433. 9s. 7d. This statement, if worthy of credit, must be referred to an earlier and less costly edifice than the present.

J.H.S.

TRAVELING NOTES IN SOUTH WALES

(To the Editor.)

Guernsey, Dec. 17, 1831.

Your ingenious and talented correspondent, *Vyvyan*, in writing on the shrimp, (the *Mirror*, p. 361, vol. xviii.) remarks that "The sea roamer may often have observed numbers of little air-holes in the sand, which expand as the sun advances. If he stirs it with his foot, he will cause a brood of young shrimps, who will instantly hop and jump about the beach in the most lively manner," &c.: these "jumpers" as they are facetiously called, are not shrimps, but sea-fleas, and they possess the elasticity for which their namesakes are so remarkable. They are as different as possible from young shrimps; and if "old shrimps" *could* "tell tales," I doubt not but that on inquiring of them, they would tell their "companions at breakfast table" the same thing. Your correspondent further adds, that "strange stories are told of the *old* shrimp," and I think, on investigation, he will find that he has told a very "strange story" of *young* shrimps. In a future communication I will give you a correct account or history of the shrimp, (if it be acceptable,) from the time when it is first

spawned until it arrives at perfection.

H.W.

(To the Editor.)

Vyvyan has not in his *Notes* named any county but South Wales, generally, where he says, "Any person who can enclose a portion of land around his cottage or otherwise, in one night, becomes owner thereof in fee." These persons in Wales are called Encroachers, and are liable to have ejectments served upon them by the Lord of the Manor, (which is often the case) to recover possession. The majority of the Encroachers pay a nominal yearly rent to the Lord of the Manor for allowing them to occupy the land. If they possess these encroachments for sixty years without any interruption, or paying rent, then they become possessed of the same. It is usual to present the Encroachments at a Court Leet held for the manor, and upon perambulating the manor, which is generally done every three or four years, these encroachments are thrown out again to the waste or common.

J.P.

*** We readily insert these corrections of *Vyvyan's* "Notes," especially as we believe our readers to take considerable interest in their accuracy.

THE SKETCH-BOOK

MY FIRE

(For the Mirror.)

On new year's morning, soon after daybreak, I entered my study, which is a little room some eight feet square, and from a wayward fancy of my own, closely resembles the cell of an alchemist. Its walls are hung with black drapery, on which appear the mystical signs of the planetary bodies, Hebrew, Persian, and various cabalistic characters, the dark enigmas of the work of transmutation, and the invocations or prayers for success employed by the alchemist. Here and there pieces of their quaint and uncouth shaped apparatus, the aludel, the alembic, and the alkaner, the pelican, the crucible, and the water-bath, occupy their respective stations. The clumsy, heavy, oaken table in the centre is covered with copies of scarce and valuable alchymical tracts, in company with the *caput mortum* and the hour-glass. A few antiques, consisting of half-a-dozen cloth-yard arrows, the stout yew bow of the green clad yeoman, the ponderous mace and helmet of the valiant knight, and other relics of the days of

chivalry, complete the decorations of this my sanctum.

In consequence of its dark and gloomy aspect, and the feeling of awe with which the family and servants regard its mystical contents, I have its undisturbed enjoyment; nobody feels a wish to enter it even in the day time, and I verily believe they would not do so at the witching hour of night, lest the mystical signs should take summary vengeance on their unhallowed intrusion.

The neighbours imagine me to be an adept in the "black art," an astrologer, or a fortune-teller, but I have no pretensions whatever to any such titles; this report has got abroad in consequence of a maid-servant having once had the temerity to peep through the key-hole, and observed on the wall opposite her "line of sight," some triangular characters. She had been in the habit of poring over a dream book, and the art of casting nativities; the Prophetic Almanac was her oracle, and its terrific title-page she informed her fellow servant "had just those queer triangle things as was hung on the walls of young master's study." She was "sure that he could tell her fortune." This important intelligence, delivered with due confidence to her fellow servant, of course spread like wildfire among the other occupants of the "lower regions," and from them amongst the handmaidens of sundry other dwellings. Thus has my astrological character been established.

As all domestics are excluded my sanctum, of course I am obliged to "do for myself," and this I prefer to being "done for," or having my room "set to rights," according to their notions of

neatness; my feelings on this point are exactly those of Scott's *Antiquary*; I therefore "do for myself," and consequently, it follows I must light my own fire. Then on the morning I have mentioned, the "grand agent" of the chemist was never more required. The "air bit shrewdly, and it was "bitter cold" upon entering the sanctum, although I had not quitted it many hours, having watched the "old year out and the new year in," and then taken a short nap; yet Jack Frost had been active during my absence, and cooled down the air of the sanctum some degrees below the freezing point, at the same time coating the window panes with his beautiful crystalline figures. The dark walls did look most awful, seen through the dun yellow light of the fog, which met my view upon drawing aside the cabalistically hung curtains. I cast a look at the Rumford grate; its black cold bars "grinned most horrible and ghastly." A sympathy was instantly established between them and my nasal organ, for I found a drop of pure crystal pendant from its extremity. Here, thought I, is an admirable question for "*The Plain Why and Because*

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