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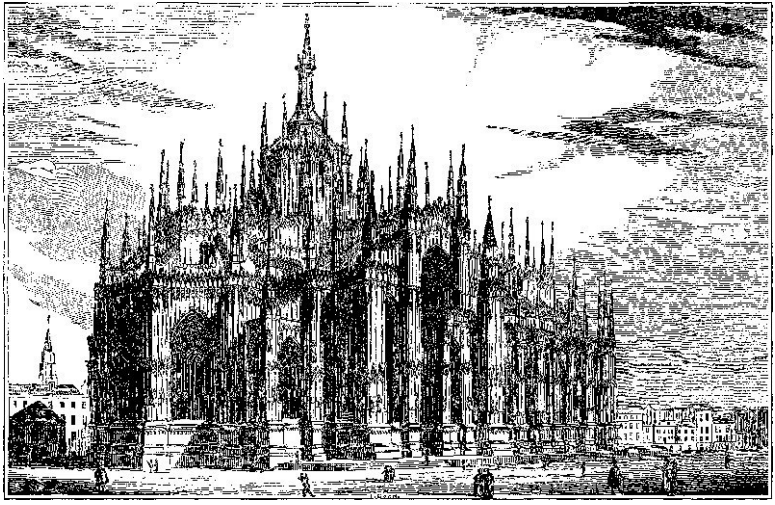
MILAN CATHEDRAL



"Show the motley-minded gentleman in;"—the old friend with a new face, or, in plain words, THE MIRROR *in a new type*. Tasteful reader, examine the symmetry, the sharp cut and finish of this our new fount of type, and tell us whether it accords not with the beauty, pungency, and polish of the notings and selections of this our first sheet. For some days this type has been glittering in the printing-office boxes, like nestling fire-flies, and these pages at first resembled so many pools or tanks of molten metal, or the windows of a fine old mansion—Hatfield House for instance,—lit up by the refulgent rays of a rising sun. The sight "inspires us, and fires us;" and we count upon *new* letter bringing us *new* friends, and thus commence our Fourteenth Volume with *new* hopes and invigorating prospects. But what subject can be more appropriate for such a commencement, than so splendid a triumph of art as

MILAN CATHEDRAL;

situate almost in the centre, and occupying part of the great square of the city. It is of Gothic architecture, and its materials are white marble. In magnitude this edifice yields to few in the universe. Inferior only to the Vatican, it equals in length, and in breadth surpasses, the cathedral of Florence and St. Paul's; in the interior elevation it yields to both; in exterior it exceeds both; in fretwork, carving, and statues, it goes beyond

all churches in the world, St. Peter's itself not excepted. Its double aisles, its clustered pillars, its lofty arches; the lustre of its walls; its numberless niches all filled with marble figures, give it an appearance novel even in Italy, and singularly majestic. The admirer of English Gothic will observe one peculiarity, which is, that in the cathedral of Milan there is no screen, and that the chancel is entirely open, and separated from the nave only by its elevation.

The pillars of the cathedral of Milan are more than ninety feet in height, and about eight in diameter. The dimensions of the church at large are as follow:—In length four hundred and ninety feet, in breadth two hundred and ninety-eight, in interior elevation under the dome two hundred and fifty-eight, and four hundred in exterior, that is to the summit of the tower. The pavement is formed of marble of different colours, disposed in various patterns and figures. The number of niches is great, and every niche has its statue, which, with those placed on the ballustrade of the roof, are reported to amount to more than four thousand. Many among them are said to be of great merit. Over the dome rises a tower or spire, or rather obelisk, for its singular shape renders it difficult to ascertain its appellation, which, whatever may be its intrinsic merit, adds little either to the beauty or to the magnificence of the structure which it surmounts. This obelisk was erected about the middle of the last century, contrary to the opinion of the best architects. Though misplaced, its form is not in itself inelegant, while its architecture and mechanism

are extremely ingenious, and deserve minute examination. In ascending the traveller will observe, that the roof of the church is covered with blocks of marble, connected together by a cement, that has not only its hardness and durability, but its colour, so that the eye scarcely perceives the juncture, and the whole roof appears one immense piece of white shining marble. The view from the summit is extensive and even novel, as it includes not only the city and the rich plain of Milan, intersected with rivers and canals, covered with gardens, orchards, vineyards, and groves, and thickly studded with villages and towns; but it extends to the grand frame of this picture, and takes in the neighbouring Alps, forming a magnificent semicircle and uniting their bleak ridges with the milder and more distant Apennines.

The traveller, says Eustace, will regret as he descends, that instead of heaping this useless and cumbersome quarry upon the dome, the trustees of the edifice did not employ the money expended upon it in erecting a front, (for that essential part is still wanting,) corresponding with the style and stateliness of this superb temple. A front has indeed been begun, but in a taste so dissimilar to that of the main building, and made up of such a medley of Roman orders and Gothic decorations, that the total suspension of such a work might be considered as an advantage, if a more appropriate portal were to be erected in its place. But unfortunately the funds destined for the completion and repair of this cathedral are now swallowed up in the general confiscation. Had it been finished, and the western front built

in a style corresponding with the other parts, the admirers of the Gothic style would have possessed one specimen perfect in its kind, and accompanied with all the advantages of the best materials, set off by a fine climate.

In materials, the cathedral of Milan surpasses all the churches of the universe, the noblest of which are only lined and coated with marble, while this is entirely built, paved, vaulted, and roofed with the same substance, and that of the whitest and most resplendent kind. The most remarkable object in the interior of this church is the subterranean chapel, in which the body of St. Charles Borromeo reposes. It is immediately under the dome, in form octangular, and lined with silver, divided into panels representing the different actions of the life of the saint. The body is in a shrine of rock crystal, on, or rather behind the altar; it is stretched at full length, drest in pontifical robes, with the crosier and mitre. The face is exposed, very improperly, because much disfigured by decay, a deformity increased and rendered more hideous by its contrast with the splendour of the vestments which cover the body, and by the pale ghastly light that gleams from the aperture above. The inscription over this chapel or mausoleum, was dictated by St. Charles himself, and breathes that modesty and piety which so peculiarly marked his character. It is as follows:

CAROLUS CARDINALIS

TITULI S. PRAXEDIS

ARCHIEP. MEDIOLAN

FREQUENTIORIBUS

CLERI POPULIQ. AC

DEVOTI FAEMINEI SEXUS

PRECIBUS SE COMMENDATUM

CUPIENS HOC LOCO SIBI

are esteemed, and some admired. Of the latter, that of St. Bartholomew is the first; it stands in the church, and represents the apostle as holding his own skin, which had been drawn off like drapery over his shoulders. The play of the muscles is represented with an accuracy, that rather disgusts and terrifies than pleases the spectator.[1] The exterior of the chancel is lined with marble divided into panels, each of which has its *basso relievo*; the interior is wainscoted, and carved in a very masterly style. The whole of the chancel was erected by St. Charles Borromeo.

In describing this magnificent cathedral, we have availed ourselves of abridging the description in Eustace's "Classical Tour," a work of high authority and sterling value on all subjects connected with the Fine Arts.

[1] The following lines are inscribed on its pedestal, in Latin, and in English:—Lest at the sculptor doubtfully you guess,'Tis Marc Agrati, not Praxiteles.This statue is reckoned worth its weight in gold.

RUSTIC AMUSEMENTS

(To the Editor of the Mirror.)

Three years ago you gave a pleasing illustration of "*the Amusements of May*," and at the same time lamented the decrease of village festivity and rural merriment, which in days langsyne cheered the honest hearts and lightened the daily toil of our rustic ancestors. From the sentiments you express on that occasion, I am led to fancy that it will afford you pleasure to hear that the song, the dance, and innocent revelry are not quite forgotten in some part of our land, and that the sweet and smiling spring is not suffered to make his lovely appearance without one welcome shout from the sons and daughters of our happy island; and, therefore, I will recount to you (and by your permission to the readers of the MIRROR) a village fête which I lately witnessed and enjoyed. On the 9th inst. (Whit-Tuesday), after a few miles' walk, I arrived in the village of Shillingston (*Dorsetshire*), whose inhabitants annually dedicate this day to those pastimes which (as one of your correspondents has observed) seem a sort of first offering to gentle skies, and are consecrated by the smiles of the tender year. Attracted by musical sounds, and following my ears instead of my nose, I soon found my way to the vicarage-house, where the company were

just arriving in procession, preceded by a pink and white silken banner, while a pipe and tabor regulated their march. Next after the music were four men each bearing a large garland of flowers, and after them followed the merry lads and smiling lasses in good order and arrayed in their holiday kirtles. The vicar's house stands on a fine lawn commanding a most enchanting view. On this verdant carpet, after a promenade and general salute to their worthy pastor and his numerous guests, dancing took place; for the time all distinctions were laid aside, and the greatest gentry in the neighbourhood, taking the hand of their more humble neighbours, led them through the mazy dance with a feeling of kindness, friendship, and good humour such as I have seldom witnessed. Two or three hours of as beautiful an evening as ever zephyr kissed were thus spent, after which, drawing up before the house "the King" was given, with three times three; next came "God save the King," and then "*Hurrah for the Bonnets o' Blue*" led the party off in the order they came to witness the ceremony of "dressing" the May-Pole. About five hundred yards brought us to the elevated object on which was placed, with all due solemnity, the before-mentioned garlands, and the pole being considered fully dressed, we all adjourned to a large barn, where dancing was kept up with great spirit, until night drew her sable curtain over the scene, and the company retired with light hearts and weary feet to their peaceful homes.

Such, sir, is the Dorsetshire way of hailing the return of gentle skies and genial seasons; a custom of the olden time, which is

productive of good feeling among all classes, and is at present conducted with good order and respectability.

Sturminster.

RURIS.

Old Poets

CUPID'S ARROWS

At Venus' entreaty for Cupid, her son,
These arrows by Vulcan were cunningly done:
The first is Love, as here you may behold
His feathers, head, and body, are of gold.
The second shaft is Hate, a foe to Love,
And bitter are his torments for to prove.
The third is Hope, from whence our comfort springs,
His feathers are pull'd from Fortune's wings.
Fourth, Jealousy in basest minds doth dwell,
This metal Vulcan's Cyclops sent from Hell.

G. PEELE.

MIND

It is the mind that maketh good or ill,
That makes a wretch, or happy, rich or poor,
For some that have abundance at their will,
Have not enough but want in greatest store,
Another that hath little asks no more,
But, in that little is both rich and wise.

SPENSER.

THE WORLD

The first and riper world of men and skill,
Yields to our later time for three inventions,
Miraculously we write, we sail, we kill,
As neither ancient scroll nor story mentions.
Print. The first hath opened learning, old concealed
And obscure arts restored to the light.
Loadstone. The second hidden countries hath revealed,
And sends Christ's Gospel to each living wight.
These we commend, but oh! what needeth more.
Guns. To teach Death more skill than he had before.

J. BASTARD.

KINGS

Kings are the Gods' vicegerents on the earth
The Gods have power, Kings from that power have might,
Kings should excell in virtue and in birth;
Gods punish wrongs, and Kings should maintain right,
They be the suns from which we borrow light.
And they as Kings, should still in justice strive
With Gods, from whom their beings they derive.

DRAYTON.

COMPANY

Remain upright yet some will quarrel pike,
And common bruit will deem them all alike.
For look, how your companions you elect
For good or ill, so shall you be suspect.

T. HUDSON.

POESIE

All art is learned by art, this art alone
It is a heavenly gift, no flesh nor bone
Can praise the honey we from *Pind* distil,
Except with holy fire his breast we fill.
From that spring flows, that men of special chose
Consum'd in learning and perfect in prose;
For to make verse in vain does travel take,
When as a prentice fairer words will make.

KING OF SCOTS.

TWELVE FOUL FAULTS

A wise man living like a drone, an old man not devout,
Youth disobedient, rich men that are charity without,
A shameless woman, vicious lords, a poor man proudly stout,
Contentious Christians, pastors that their functions do neglect,
A wicked king, no discipline, no laws men to direct,
Are twelve the foulest faults that most commonwealths infect.

W. WARNER.

RIVERS

Fair *Danubie* is praised for being wide.
Nilus commended for the seven-fold head;
Euphrates for the swiftness of the tide,
And for the garden whence his course is led,
And banks of *Rhine* with vines o'erspread.
Take *Loire* and *Po*, yet all may not compare
With English *Thames* for buildings rare.

STORER.

The Naturalist

QUADRUPEDS AND BIRDS FEEDING ON SHELL-FISH

It is nothing surprising that the different species of walrus, inhabitants of the ocean, should feed partly on shell-fish, but perhaps you would not expect to find among their enemies animals strictly terrestrial. Yet the oran otang and the preacher monkey often descend to the sea to devour what shell-fish they may find strewed upon the shores. The former, according to Carreri Gemelli, feed in particular upon a large species of oyster, and fearful of inserting their paws between the open valves, lest the oyster should close and crush them, they first place a tolerably large stone within the shell, and then drag out their victim with safety. The latter are no less ingenious. Dampier saw several of them take up oysters from the beach, lay them on a stone, and beat them with another till they demolished the shells. Wafer observed the monkeys in the island of Gorgonia to proceed in a similar manner; and those of the Cape of Good Hope, if we are to credit La Loubere, perpetually amuse themselves by transporting shells from the shore to the tops of mountains, with the intention undoubtedly of devouring them at leisure. Even the fox, when

pressed by hunger, will deign to eat muscles and other bivalves; and the racoon, whose fur is esteemed by hatters next in value to that of the beaver, when near the shore lives much on them, more particularly on oysters. We are told that it will watch the opening of the shells, dexterously put in its paw, and tear out the contents. Not, however, without danger, for sometimes, we are assured, by a sudden closure, the oyster will catch the thief, and detain him until he is drowned by the return of the tide. The story, I regret to say, appears somewhat apocryphal.

These are amusing facts; the following, to the epicure at least, may be equally interesting. In some parts of England it is a prevalent and probably a correct opinion, that the shelled-snails contribute much to the fattening of their sheep. On the hill above Whitsand Bay in Cornwall, and in the south of Devonshire, the *Bùlimus acùtus* and the *Hèlix virgàta*, which are found there in vast profusion, are considered to have this good effect; and it is indeed impossible that the sheep can browse on the short grass of the places just mentioned, without devouring a prodigious quantity of them, especially in the night, or after rain, when the Bùlimi and Hèlices ascend the stunted blades. "The sweetest mutton," says Borlase, "is reckoned to be that of the smallest sheep, which feed on the commons where the sands are scarce covered with the green sod, and the grass exceedingly short; such are the towens or sand hillocks in Piran Sand, Gwythien, Philac, and Senangreen, near the Land's End, and elsewhere in like situations. From these sands come forth snails of the turbinated

kind, but of different species, and all sizes from the adult to the smallest just from the egg; these spread themselves over the plains early in the morning, and, whilst they are in quest of their own food among the dews, yield a most fattening nourishment to the sheep." (*Hist. of Cornwall.*)

Among birds the shell-fish have many enemies. Several of the duck and gull tribes, as you might anticipate, derive at least a portion of their subsistence from them. The pied oyster-catcher receives its name from the circumstance of feeding on oysters and limpets, and its bill is so well adapted to the purpose of forcing asunder the valves of the one, and of raising the other from the rock, that "the Author of Nature," as Derham says, "seems to have framed it purely for that use." Several kinds of crows likewise prey upon shell-fish, and the manner in which they force the strong hold of their victims is very remarkable. A friend of Dr. Darwin's saw above a hundred crows on the northern coast of Ireland, at once, preying upon muscles. Each crow took a muscle up in the air twenty or forty yards high, and let it fall on the stones, and thus broke the shell. Many authorities might be adduced in corroboration of this statement. In Southern Africa so many of the Testàcea are consumed by these and other birds, as to have given rise to an opinion that the marine shells found buried in the distant plains, or in the sides of the mountains, have been carried there by their agency, and not, as generally supposed, by eruptions of the sea. Mr. Barrow, who is of this opinion, tells us, in confirmation of it, that "there

is scarcely a sheltered cavern in the sides of the mountains that arise immediately from the sea, where living shell-fish may not be found any day of the year. Crows even, and vultures, as well as aquatic birds, detach the shell-fish from the rocks, and mount with them into the air: shells thus carried are said to be frequently found on the very summit even of the Table Mountain. In one cavern at the point of Mussel Bay," he adds, "I disturbed some thousands of birds, and found as many thousands of living shell-fish scattered on the surface of a heap of shells, that for aught I know, would have filled as many thousand wagons." The story, therefore, of the ancient philosopher whose bald pate one of these unlucky birds mistook for a stone, and dropped a shell upon it, thereby killing at once both, is not so tramontane as to stumble all belief.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.