

VARIOUS

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LYDFORD BRIDGE



LYDFORD BRIDGE.

This is an interesting scene from the wild and wonderful in Nature. Its romantic luxuriance must win the attention of the artist, and the admiration of the less wistful beholder; while the philosophic mind, unaccustomed to vulgar wonder, may seek in its formation the cause of some of the most important changes of the earth's surface. Our esteemed friend and correspondent *Vyvyan*, is probably

familiar with the locality of Lydford: his fancy might people it with pixies, and group its scenery into a kind of topographical romance; probably not unaided by its proximity to Dartmoor.¹

Lydford is situated about seven miles north of Tavistock. It is, in the words of its topographers,² a poor decayed village, consisting of rude cottages. It was formerly a place of importance: for in Domesday Book, it is rated in the same manner and at the same time with London. Some remains of its ancient importance may still be seen in a square tower, or keep of a castle, which was formerly used as a court and a prison, where those criminals were tried and confined, who offended against the Stannary Laws. This building is alluded to by William Browne³—

They have a castle on a hill;
I took it for an old windmill,
The vane's blown off by weather;
To lie therein one night, its guest,
'Twere better to be ston'd and prest,
Or hang'd—now choose you whether.

The scenery round the village is singularly picturesque: one of its most prominent objects, *The Bridge* is represented in the Engraving. It bears great analogy, in situation and character, to the celebrated Devil's Bridge in Wales. It consists of one rude arch, thrown across a narrow, rocky chasm, which sinks nearly eighty feet from the level of the road. At the bottom of this channel the small river Lyd is heard rattling through its contracted course. The singularity of this scene is not perceived in merely passing over the bridge: to appreciate its character, and comprehend its awfully impressive effects, it is necessary to see the bridge, the chasm, and the roaring water, from different projecting crags which impend over the river. At a little distance below the bridge, "the fissure gradually spreads its rocky jaws; the bottom opens; and, instead of the dark precipices which have hitherto overhung and obscured the struggling river, it now emerges into day, and rolls its murmuring current through a winding valley, confined within magnificent banks, darkened with woods, which swell into bold promontories, or fall back into sweeping recesses, till they are lost to the eye in distance. Thickly shaded by trees, which shoot out from the sides of the rent, the scene at Lydford Bridge is not so terrific as it would have been, had a little more light been let in upon the abyss, just sufficient to produce a *darkness visible*. As it is, however, the chasm cannot be regarded without shuddering; nor will the stoutest heart meditate unappalled upon the dreadful anecdotes connected with the spot."⁴

Scenes of this description frequently give rise to marvellous stories; and Lydford Bridge has furnished many themes for the gossip's tongue. It is related, that a London rider was benighted on this road, in a heavy storm, and, wishing to get to some place of shelter, spurred his horse forward with more than common speed. The tempest had been tremendous during the night; and in the morning the rider was informed that Lydford Bridge had been swept away with the current. He shuddered to reflect on his narrow escape; his horse having cleared the chasm by a great sudden leap in the middle of his course, though the occasion of his making it at the time was unknown.

Two or three persons have chosen this spot for self-destruction; and in a moment of desperation, have dashed themselves from the bridge into the murky chasm.

Libels on Poets.—Cicero tells us, Democritus and Plato said that there could be no good poet without a tincture of madness; and Aristotle calls poets madmen.—P.T.W.

¹ Dartmoor appears the head-quarters of dreariness and desolation, forming a mountain tract of nearly 80,000 acres in extent, strewed with granite boulders and fragments of rocks, and appearing to set cultivation at defiance.—*Brande's Outline of Geology*.

² John Britton and E.W. Brayley: in the *Beauties of England and Wales*, vol. iv.

³ A poet of considerable eminence in his day, born at Tavistock, in the year 1590. He was noticed by Selden, Drayton, Brooke, Glanville, and Ben Jonson.

⁴ Warner's *Walk through the Western Counties*.

THOU WERT THE RAINBOW OF MY DREAMS

Thou wert the rainbow of my dreams,
To whom the eyes of Hope might turn,
And bid her sacred flame arise
Like incense from the festal urn;
But as the thunder clouds conspire
To wreck the lovely summer sky,
So Death destroyed the liquid fire
Which shone so brightly in thine eye!

The cypress weeps upon thy tomb:
But when the stars unfold their leaves
Amid their bow'rs of purple gloom,
More fervently my spirit grieves;
And as the rainbow sheds its light
In fairy hues upon the sea,
So this cold world appears more bright
When pensive Memory thinks of thee!

G.R.C.

LORD BYRON

Translation of a letter written by Lord Byron, in Greek and Italian, to the Pacha of Patras.⁵

Highness.—A vessel containing several of my friends and servants, having been captured and conducted by a Turkish frigate to your fortresses, was released by your highness' command. I return you thanks, not for releasing a vessel bearing a neutral flag, and which being under British protection, no one had a right to detain; but for having treated my friends with great courtesy while at your disposal. Hoping it may not be unacceptable to your highness, I have requested the Greek Governor of this place to grant me four Turkish prisoners; which has been readily conceded. I send them therefore, free, to your highness, in order to return your courtesy as far as is in my power. They are sent without conditions, but if the affair is worthy of your remembrance, I would merely beseech your highness to treat with humanity such Greeks as are in your power, or may chance to fall into the hands of the Musselmen, since the horrors of war are sufficient in themselves, without adding on either side cruelties in cold blood.

I have the honour to be, &c.

NOEL BYRON, Peer of England.

Missolonghi, Jan. 23, 1824.

⁵ From a correspondent (E.), who believes that no English version of this letter has hitherto appeared in print.

WHEN WILT THOU RETURN?

When wilt thou return?
The silver clouds are closing
Like billows o'er the fairy path
Of sunset there reposing;
The sapphire fields of heaven,
With its golden splendour burn,
And purple is the mountain peak,—
But when wilt thou return?

When wilt thou return?
The woods are bright with summer,
And the violet's bower is grac'd
With the rose—a queenly comer;
The stars, that in the air
Like ethereal spirits burn,
Seem watching for thy steps,—
Oh I when wilt thou return?

When wilt thou return?
The sheathless sword is idle,
And each warrior from his steed
Has thrown aside the bridle.
Hark!—'tis the trumpet's call!
With hope our bosoms burn;
Its echo wakes the distant hills,
Announcing thy return!

G.R.C.

ANECDOTE GALLERY

RECORDS OF MY LIFE

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MONSIEUR TONSON."

Angelica Kauffman

The person of this lady, by all accounts, was highly interesting, and her manners and accomplishments were peculiarly attractive. It is said that Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was thoroughly acquainted with human nature, and never likely to be deceived in his estimate of individuals, was so much attached to her that he solicited her hand. It appeared, however, that she refused him as she was attached to the late Sir Nathaniel Holland, then Mr. Dance, an eminent painter, whose portrait of Garrick in the character of Richard the Third is the best and most spirited representation of that unrivalled actor that ever appeared, though all the most distinguished artists of the time employed themselves on the same admirable subject. The correspondence that had taken place between Mrs. Kauffman and Mr. Dance became known, and was thought to be of a very interesting description, insomuch that his Majesty George the Third, who generally heard of anything worthy of attention, requested Mr. Dance would permit him to peruse the letters that had passed between them during their courtship. What put a period to an intercourse which, being founded upon mutual attachment, held forth so favourable a prospect of mutual happiness, has never been developed, and is only matter of conjecture. Mrs. Kauffman, after the termination of this promising courtship, went abroad, and was unfortunately deluded into a marriage with a common footman, in Germany, who had assumed a title and appeared to be a person of high rank and affluence. Mrs. Kauffman, it is said, by the intervention of friends had recourse to legal authorities, was enabled to separate from the impostor, but did not return to this country, and died a few years after, having never recovered her spirits after the shock of so degrading an alliance. It is not a little surprising that a lady so intelligent and accomplished should have been the victim of such a deception.

Highwaymen.—Jemmy Maclaine

Mr. Donaldson told me that once having betted twenty pounds on a horse at Newmarket, he won, but at the end of the race could not find the person who had lost. Returning to London the next day, his post-chaise was stopped by a highwayman, whom he immediately recognised as the loser of the day before. He addressed the highwayman as follows: "Sir, I will give you all I have about me if you will pay me the twenty pounds which I won of you yesterday at Newmarket." The man instantly spurred his horse, and was off in a moment. It is somewhat strange that, soon after Mr. Donaldson landed in Jamaica, he saw the same man in a coffee-house. He approached him, and in a whisper reminded him of his loss at Newmarket; the man rushed out of the room, and, according to report went to the Blue Mountains, and was never heard of again.

Mr. Donaldson was in real danger from another highwayman, who was celebrated in his day, and known as a fashionable man by the name of Maclaine. This man came from Ireland, and made a splendid figure for some time, but as his means of support were not known, he was generally considered as a doubtful character. He was by all accounts a tall, showy, good-looking man, and a

frequent visitor at Button's Coffee-house, founded, as is well known, by Addison, in favour of an old servant of the Warwick family, but never visited by him, when driven from his home by the ill-humour of his wife; he then resorted to Will's, on the opposite side of the same street, that he might not be reminded of domestic anxieties. Button's was on the south side of Russell-street, Covent-garden; and Will's in the same street, at the corner of Bow-street. Button's became a private house, and Mrs. Inchbald lodged there. Mr. Donaldson, observing that Maclaine paid particular attention to the bar-maid, the daughter of the landlord, gave a hint to the father of Maclaine's dubious character. The father cautioned his daughter against the addresses of Maclaine, and imprudently told her by whose advice he put her on her guard; she as imprudently told Maclaine. The next time Donaldson visited the coffee-room, and was sitting in one of the boxes, Maclaine entered, and in a loud tone said, "Mr. Donaldson, I wish to *spake* to you in a private room." Mr. Donaldson being unarmed, and naturally afraid of being alone with such a man, said in answer, that as nothing could pass between them that he did not wish the whole world to know, he begged leave to decline the invitation. "Very well," said Maclaine, as he left the room, "we shall *mate* again." A day or two after, as Mr. Donaldson was walking near Richmond in the evening, he saw Maclaine on horseback, who on perceiving him spurred the animal and was rapidly approaching him; fortunately, at that moment a gentleman's carriage appeared in view, when Maclaine immediately turned his horse towards the carriage, and Donaldson hurried into the protection of Richmond as fast as possible. But for the appearance of the carriage, which presented better prey, it is probable that Maclaine would have shot Mr. Donaldson immediately. Maclaine a short time after committed a highway robbery, was tried, found guilty, and hanged at Tyburn.

Extraordinary Story

What the religious principles of Mr. Donaldson were, I never knew, but I am sure he had too manly a mind to give way to superstition. The following circumstance, however, he told me as a fact in which he placed full confidence, on account of the character of the gentleman who related it. The latter was a particular friend of his, and a member of Parliament. In order to attend the House of Commons, he had taken apartments in St. Anne's Churchyard, Westminster. On the evening when he took possession, he was struck with something that appeared to him mysterious in the manner of the maid-servant, who looked like a man disguised; and he felt a very unpleasant emotion. This feeling was strengthened by a similar deportment in the mistress of the house, who soon after entered his room, and asked him if he wanted anything before he retired to rest: disliking her manner, he soon dismissed her, and went to bed, but the disagreeable impression made on his mind by the maid and mistress, kept him long awake; at length, however, he fell asleep. During his sleep he dreamed that the corpse of a gentleman, who had been murdered, was deposited in the cellar of the house. This dream co-operating with the unfavourable, or rather repulsive countenances and demeanour of the two women, precluded all hopes of renewed sleep, and it being the summer season, he arose about five o'clock in the morning, took his hat, and resolved to quit a house of such alarm and terror. To his surprise, as he was leaving it, he met the mistress in the entry, dressed, as if she had never gone to bed. She seemed to be much agitated, and inquired his reason for wishing to go out so early in the morning. He hesitated a moment with increased alarm, and then told her that he expected a friend, who was to arrive by a stage in Bishopsgate-street, and that he was going to meet him. He was suffered to go out of the house, and when revived by the open air, he felt, as he afterwards declared, as if relieved from impending destruction. He stated that in a few hours after, he returned with a friend to whom he had told his dream, and the impression made on him by the maid and the mistress; he, however, only laughed at him for his superstitious terrors, but on entering the house, they found that it was deserted, and calling in a gentleman who was accidentally passing, they all descended to the cellar, and actually found a corpse in the state which the gentleman's dream had represented.

Drawing an Inference

Dr. Monsey, with two or three old members of the university, in the course of an evening walk, differed about a proper definition of man. While they were severally offering their notions on the subject, they came to a wall where an itinerant artist had drawn various representations of animals, ships, &c. After complimenting him on his skill, one of the gentlemen asked him if he could *draw an inference*. "No," said the artist, "I never saw one." Logic then gave way to jocularly, and a man coming by with a fine team of horses, they stopped him, spoke highly of the condition of his horses, particularly admiring the first. "That horse, carter," said another of the gentlemen, "seems to be a very strong one, I suppose he could draw a butt," The man assented. "Do you think he could *draw an inference*?"—"Why," said the man, "he can draw anything *in reason*." "There," said Monsey, "what becomes of your definition, when you met a man that could *not draw an inference* and a *horse that could*?"

Disposal of the body for Dissection

Dr. Monsey had the utmost contempt for funeral ceremonies, and exacted a promise from his daughter, that she would not interfere with the arrangement which he had made with Mr. Thompson Forster, the surgeon, for the disposal of his body, conceiving that whenever it was dissected by that gentleman, something might occur for the illustration and advancement of anatomy. "What can it signify to me," said he, "whether my carcass is cut up by the knife of a surgeon, or the tooth of a worm?" He had a large box in his chambers at Chelsea, full of air-holes, for the purpose of carrying his body to Mr. Forster, in case he should be in a trance when supposed to be dead. It was provided with poles, like a sedan-chair.

Voltaire

Mentioning Voltaire, I may as well relate in this place a circumstance communicated to me by Monsey, upon what he deemed good authority, that Voltaire being invited to dine with a lady of quality while he was in London, to meet some persons of distinction, waited upon the lady an hour or two earlier than the time appointed. The lady apologized for the necessity of leaving him, as she had visits to pay, but begged he would amuse himself with the books in the room, promising to return very soon. After the party broke up, having occasion to refer to her *escrutoire*, she evidently found that it had been opened in her absence, and though nothing had been taken away, her papers were obviously not in the same order as when she left them. She inquired anxiously who had been in the room, and was assured nobody but Voltaire, who had remained there till she returned home. As Voltaire was destitute of all religious principles it is not wonderful that he was equally devoid of all moral delicacy. A severe account of his conduct towards the great King of Prussia, while he was at the court of that monarch, is given in "The Reverie," a work before referred to.

Voltaire once dined in company with Pope, Lord Bolingbroke, and several of the most distinguished characters in London, and said it was "the proudest day he had ever enjoyed."

THE PUBLIC JOURNALS

THE CINQUE PORTS—THEIR PAST AND PRESENT STATE

(Abridged from the United Service Journal.)

The precise time when the Cinque Ports were first incorporated by charter is unknown, but it was at a very early period of our history; the institution being formed on that adopted by the Romans, while masters of Britain, for the defence of the coasts against the northern pirates. The difference between them consists in the number of the stations incorporated, the Roman being nine, under the governance of an officer whose title was, Comes littoris Saxonici; and the Saxon consisting of five, under the superintendence of a chief, whose title is, Lord Warden and Admiral of the Cinque Ports. There is no charter extant of the ports prior to Edward I.; and as they are not mentioned collectively in Domesday, many persons have been led to conclude, I think erroneously, that they did not exist as a corporation at the time when that ancient record was taken. Dover, Sandwich, and Romney are named as privileged ports, from which it may be inferred, that the corporation flourished at that time,—and for this reason,—Hastings has always been considered the first port in precedence, which would not probably have been the case, if it had been one of the latest privileged. The charter of Edward I. mentions immunities granted to the Cinque Ports by William the Conqueror; and, what is still more to the purpose, because it carries back their origin to the Saxon times, is, that King John, in his charter, says, that the Barons of the Cinque Ports had in their possession, charters of most of the preceding kings, back to Edward the Confessor, *which he had seen*

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