

VARIOUS

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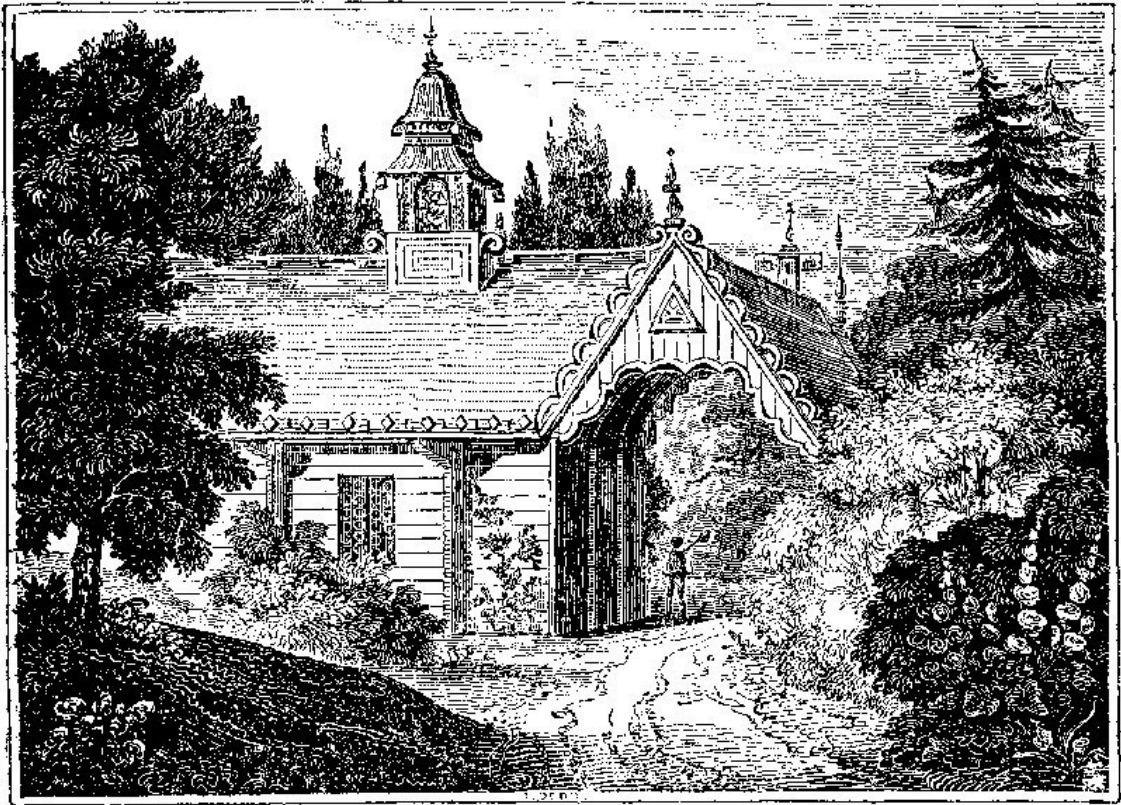
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Содержание

BOAT-HOUSE AT VIRGINIA WATER	6
PEERAGE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM	7
LADY OF WALSINGHAM	8
TAPESTRY IN WINDSOR CASTLE	10
COWSLIPS.—A SONNET	11
The Naturalist,	12
THE WHITE-HEADED, OR BALD EAGLE.2	12
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	15

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BOAT-HOUSE AT VIRGINIA WATER

Lakers and lovers of the picturesque will, doubtless, be flocking to Virginia Water in the coming summer. The rides and walks on its banks are thrown open to the public; but we hope this privilege will not be abused, as of old; for "there was a time when Virginia Water was profaned by the presence of prize-fighters, who were accustomed to train in the secluded alleys that bordered the lake; and it was, therefore, quite necessary that the privilege of admission to the grounds should be withdrawn from the inn to which these persons resorted." We hope better things from the improved taste of our times.

The attractions of the place are of no common order: all that art and luxury could suggest have been lent to its embellishment. "The artificial water is the largest in the kingdom, with the single exception of Blenheim; the cascade is, perhaps, the most striking imitation we have of the great works of Nature; and the grounds are arranged in the grandest style of landscape gardening."¹

Many persons may be disposed to question the taste of the Boat-house in the Engraving. Its style is toy-like, and too artificial to suit our idea of picturesque propriety. It was built by direction of the late King, and its design or approval was probably one of his labours of leisure. It is less decorated and fantastical than other buildings in its vicinity, and perhaps deserves the faint praise of prettiness. Grave persons dislike the little bells attached to the lantern-like part of the roof, and consider them too closely allied to the cap of folly. Perhaps this objection to the building itself will only make the contiguous scenery more delightful. Of its varied character, the Engraving furnishes an accurate idea, since the original sketch was made in the course of last year. We could linger amidst these sylvan glories all the live long day, with a canopy of foliage just to shelter us from the heat of the meridian sun.

¹ We quote these passages from an excellent description of Virginia Water, in the Third Series of the London Magazine, and, for the most part quoted in vol. xii. of *The Mirror*. The reader should turn to these pages.

PEERAGE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

(For the Mirror.)

To the Barons of England, of a truth, it may be said, man is indebted for constitutional liberty; for if we look but to Greece and Rome, those boasted lands of freedom, where, as the arts and sciences increased, liberty decayed, we shall perceive myriads of slaves, governed, as in savage nations, by a few political chiefs, whom brute force and superior address had raised above their fellow-citizens.

It was in modern times, through the instrumentality of the steel-clad nobles of Britain, that liberty was to dawn on the human race: and of these, Henry VII. could only summon 28 to his first parliament; and only 36 were summoned to the first parliament of Henry VIII. In 1830, the House of Peers consisted of 380 persons.

It is a fact but little regarded, that the first noble family in England was that of Lord Courtenay, who descended from the Earls of Devonshire, who often intermarried with the blood-royal of France and Britain, as may be found at the commencement of Sully's Memoirs. The Duke of Beaufort is descended from Geoffrey Plantagenet, Earl of Anjou, son of Foulk, King of Jerusalem, and grandson to the Empress Maud, daughter of Henry I. Consequently, this family has flourished, as dukes, marquesses, and earls, without descending to a lower degree, for full 700 years. The Duke of Montague traces his descent, by the female line, from Charlemagne. The Earl of Shrewsbury's family is derived from the famous Talbot, the terror of France: hence they have been peers for 500 years.

In 1827, the number of the Irish nobility was 212—viz. 1 duke, 14 marquesses, 76 earls, 48 viscounts, 70 barons, and 4 peeresses. There were 135 married, 27 widowers, and 45 bachelors. Of the 162 married and widowers, 38 were without children, and the remaining 134 had living 278 sons and 256 daughters. Four Irish peers were Knights of the Garter, 10 of the Bath, and 18 of St. Patrick. Among these 212 Irish nobility, 66 were also British peers. The ancestors of the Irish peers became ennobled as follows:—5 as princes of the blood-royal, 8 as courtiers, 8 as younger branches of nobility, 11 as statesmen, 7 for naval service, 23 for military service, 6 for diplomatic service, 11 for legal service, 11 by marriage, and 121 by influence of wealth.

The descent of 13 peers can be traced to the 11th century, that of 10 to the 12th, 12 to the 13th, 13 to the 14th, 10 to the 15th, 37 to the 16th, 31 to the 17th, and 2 to the 18th; and 37 whose genealogies cannot be traced with accuracy. The ancestors of 48 Irish peers were foreigners. The number of Catholic peers are, 8 for Ireland—viz. 2 earls, 4 viscounts, and 2 barons; in Scotland, only 2 earls; and in England 8—viz. 1 duke, 1 earl, and 6 barons.

W.G.C

LADY OF WALSINGHAM

(For the Mirror.)

"What led (says Britton) to the great celebrity which the town of Old Walsingham, Norfolk, obtained for centuries, was the widow lady of Ricoldie Faverches founding, about the year 1061, a small chapel, in honour of the Virgin Mary, similar to the Sancta Casa at Nazareth.

"Sir Geoffrey de Favenches, or Faverches, her son, confirmed the endowments, made an additional foundation of a priory for Augustine canons, and erected a conventual church. The numerous gifts and grants to this famous religious house form one of those extensive and dull mazes of ecclesiastical record, through which the historic topographer is constrained to wade. At the Dissolution, the annual revenues of the monastery were valued, according to Speed, at 446*l.* 14*s.* 4*d.* That its wealth should have been immensely great is not surprising, when the fame of the image of the *Lady of Walsingham* is taken into the account; for it was as much frequented, if not more than the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket, at Canterbury. Foreigners of all nations came hither on pilgrimage; many kings and queens of England also paid devours to it: so that the number and quality of her devotees appeared to equal those of the Lady Loretto, in Italy. Spelman observes, that it is said King Henry the Eighth, in the second year of his reign, walked *barefooted* from the village of Basham to this place, and then presented a valuable necklace to the image. Of this costly present, as well as the other saleable appendages, Cromwell doubtless took good care, when, by his master's orders, he seized the image, and burnt it at Chelsea.

"Erasmus, who visited this place, says, that the chapel, then rebuilding, was distinct from the church, and inside of it was a small chapel of wood, on each side of which was a little, narrow door, where those who were admitted came with their offerings, and paid their devotions; that it was lighted up with wax torches, and that the glitter of gold, silver, and jewels would lead you to suppose it to be the seat of the gods.

"In one of his colloquies, entitled, *Peregrinatio*, is a very humorous description of the superstitions of this place. The monks had contrived to persuade many that the *galaxy* in the heavens was a miraculous indication of the *way* to this place. Hence that was called *Walsingham Way*.

"The present remains of this once noble monastic pile, is a portal, or west entrance; a rich ornamented lofty arch, sixty feet high, which formed the east end of the church, supposed to have been erected in the time of Henry the Seventh; the refectory, seventy-eight feet long and twenty-seven broad, and the walls twenty-six and a half feet in height; a Saxon arch, part of the original chapel, which has a zig-zag moulding; part of the old cloisters, a stone bath, and two uncovered wells, called the *Wishing Wells*. The devotees to the *Lady of Walsingham* were taught to believe, that whoever had permission to drink of these waters could obtain, under certain restrictions, whatever they might wish for."

"The principal part of the venerable ruins are included in the pleasure gardens of Henry Lee Warner, Esq., who has a large, commodious house, which occupies the site of the priory. The present proprietor has progressively, for some years past, been making various improvements in planting and laying out the grounds in the immediate vicinity of the mansion. Among the recent embellishments of the place is a new bridge across the rivulet, in front of the house, and widening the course of the stream, so as to give it the appearance of a lake. Contiguous to this water, and intermixed in a fine grove of large trees, are the various fragments of the ruins already noticed. Some of these are interesting relics of architectural antiquity; and though several detached parts remain, yet we cannot (says Britton) but regret the wasteful destruction that has taken place at this once celebrated place of monastic splendour and human superstition."—*Beauties of England and Wales*, vol. ix.—Norfolk.

It has been supposed that Henry the Eighth, tempted by the riches and splendour of the religious houses at Walsingham, precipitated their fall.

P.T.W

TAPESTRY IN WINDSOR CASTLE

(To the Editor.)

There are *six* pieces of tapestry in the Ball-room adjoining St. George's Hall, Windsor Castle; and the subject is Jason and the Golden Fleece. In your account you stated four.

A SUBSCRIBER

COWSLIPS.—A SONNET

BY HENRY BRANDRETH, JUN

Author of Minstrel Melodies, The Garland, &c

COWSLIPS—sweet Cowslips! I scarce know a flower
More prized than is the cowslip. Childhood's hand
Plucks it as if by instinct. Every land
Has some peculiar flowret—this the bower,
The mountain that adorning. April's shower
The modest primrose sifts with beauty bland,
Or o'er the blue-bell waves her fairy wand,
The delegate of Flora's magic power.
But most love I the cowslip, with its fair
And fragrant petals, studding, as with gold,
The emerald meadow, or the hedge-row green;
For, while the laugh of Infancy is there,
The heart must be as very marble cold
Of him who frowns on such a joyous scene.

The Naturalist,

THE WHITE-HEADED, OR BALD EAGLE.²

(From Wilson's *American Ornithology*, judiciously re-printed in two volumes of *Constable's Miscellany*.)

This distinguished bird, as he is the most beautiful of his tribe in this part of the world, and the adopted emblem of our country, is entitled to particular notice. The celebrated Cataract of Niagara is a noted place of resort for the bald eagle, as well on account of the fish procured there, as for the numerous carcasses of squirrels, deer, bears, and various other animals, that, in their attempts to cross the river above the Falls, have been dragged into the current, and precipitated down that tremendous gulf, where, among the rocks that bound the Rapids below, they furnish a rich repast for the vulture, the raven, and the bald eagle, the subject of the present account. He has been long known to naturalists, being common to both continents, and occasionally met with from a very high northern latitude, to the borders of the torrid zone, but chiefly in the vicinity of the sea, and along the shores and cliffs of our lakes and large rivers. Formed by nature for braving the severest cold; feeding equally on the produce of the sea, and of the land; possessing powers of flight capable of outstripping even the tempests themselves; unawed by any thing but man; and, from the ethereal heights to which he soars, looking abroad, at one glance, on an immeasurable expanse of forests, fields, lakes, and ocean, deep below him, he appears indifferent to the little localities of change of seasons; as, in a few minutes, he can pass from summer to winter, from the lower to the higher regions of the atmosphere, the abode of eternal cold, and from thence descend, at will, to the torrid, or the arctic regions of the earth. He is, therefore, found at all seasons, in the countries he inhabits; but prefers such places as have been mentioned above, from the great partiality he has for fish.

In procuring these, he displays, in a very singular manner, the genius and energy of his character, which is fierce, contemplative, daring, and tyrannical; attributes not exerted but on particular occasions, but, when put forth, overpowering all opposition. Elevated on the high dead limb of some gigantic tree that commands a wide view of the neighbouring shore and ocean, he seems calmly to contemplate the motions of the various feathered tribes that pursue their busy avocations below; the snow-white gulls slowly winnowing the air; the busy fringes coursing along the sands; trains of ducks streaming over the surface; silent and watchful cranes, intent and wading; clamorous crows; and all the winged multitudes that subsist by the bounty of this vast liquid magazine of nature. High over all these hovers one, whose action instantly arrests his whole attention. By his wide curvature of wing, and sudden suspension in air, he knows him to be the fish hawk, settling over some devoted victim of the deep. His eye kindles at the sight, and, balancing himself, with half-opened wings, on the branch, he watches the result. Down, rapid as an arrow from heaven, descends the distant object of his attention, the roar of its wings reaching the ear as it disappears in the deep, making the surges foam around! At this moment, the eager looks of the eagle are all ardour; and, levelling his neck for flight, he sees the fish hawk once more emerge, struggling with his prey, and mounting in the air with screams of exultation. These are the signals for our hero, who, launching into the air, instantly gives

² The epithet *bald*, applied to this species, whose head is thickly covered with feathers, is equally improper and absurd with the titles goatsucker, kingfisher, &c. bestowed on others, and seems to have been occasioned by the white appearance of the head, when contrasted with, the dark colour of the rest of the plumage. The appellation, however, being now almost universal, is retained in the following pages.

chase, and soon gains on the fish hawk; each exerts his utmost to mount above the other, displaying in these rencontres the most elegant and sublime aerial evolutions. The unencumbered eagle rapidly advances, and is just on the point of reaching his opponent, when, with a sudden scream, probably of despair and honest execration, the latter drops his fish; the eagle, poising himself for a moment, as if to take a more certain aim, descends like a whirlwind, snatches it in his grasp ere it reaches the water, and bears his ill-gotten booty silently away to the woods.

These predatory attacks and defensive manoeuvres of the eagle and the fish hawk, are matters of daily observation along the whole of our sea board, from Georgia to New England, and frequently excite great interest in the spectators. Sympathy, however, on this as on most other occasions, generally sides with the honest and laborious sufferer, in opposition to the attacks of power, injustice, and rapacity, qualities for which our hero is so generally notorious, and which, in his superior *man*, are certainly detestable. As for the feelings of the poor fish, they seem altogether out of the question.

When driven, as he sometimes is, by the combined courage and perseverance of the fish hawks from their neighbourhood, and forced to hunt for himself, he retires more inland, in search of young pigs, of which he destroys great numbers. In the lower parts of Virginia and North Carolina, where the inhabitants raise vast herds of those animals, complaints of this kind are very general against him. He also destroys young lambs in the early part of spring; and will sometimes attack old sickly sheep, aiming furiously at their eyes.

In corroboration of the remarks I have myself made on the manners of the bald eagle, many accounts have reached me from various persons of respectability, living on or near our sea coast. The substance of all these I shall endeavour to incorporate with the present account.

Mr. John L. Gardiner, who resides on an island of three thousand acres, about three miles from the eastern point of Long Island, from which it is separated by Gardiner's Bay, and who has consequently many opportunities of observing the habits of these birds, has favoured me with a number of interesting particulars on this subject; for which I beg leave thus publicly to return my grateful acknowledgment.

"The bald eagles," says this gentleman, "remain on this island during the whole winter. They can be most easily discovered on evenings by their loud snoring while asleep on high oak trees; and, when awake, their hearing seems to be nearly as good as their sight. I think I mentioned to you, that I had myself seen one flying with a lamb ten days old, and which it dropped on the ground from about ten or twelve feet high. The struggling of the lamb, more than its weight, prevented its carrying it away. My running, hallooing, and being very near, might prevent its completing its design. It had broke the back in the act of seizing it; and I was under the necessity of killing it outright to prevent its misery. The lamb's dam seemed astonished to see its innocent offspring borne off in the air by a bird.

"I was lately told," continues Mr. Gardiner, "by a man of truth, that he saw an eagle rob a hawk of its fish, and the hawk seemed so enraged as to fly down at the eagle, while the eagle very deliberately, in the air, threw himself partly over on his back, and, while he grasped with one foot the fish, extended the other to threaten or seize the hawk. I have known several hawks unite to attack the eagle; but never knew a single one to do it. The eagle seems to regard the hawks as the hawks do the kingbirds, only as teasing, troublesome fellows."

From the same intelligent and obliging friend, I lately received a well preserved skin of the bald eagle, which, from its appearance, and the note that accompanied it, seems to have belonged to a very formidable individual. "It was shot," says Mr. Gardiner, "last winter, on this island, and weighed thirteen pounds, measured three feet in length, and seven from tip to tip of the expanded wings; was extremely fierce looking; though wounded, would turn his back to no one; fastened his claws into the head of a dog, and was with difficulty disengaged. I have rode on horseback within five or six rods of one, who, by his bold demeanour, raising his feathers, &c. seemed willing to dispute the ground with its owner. The crop of the present was full of mutton, from my part-blood Merinos; and his intestines contained feathers, which he probably devoured with a duck, or winter gull, as I

observed an entire foot and leg of some water fowl. I had two killed previous to this, which weighed ten pounds avoirdupois each."

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