

The Project Gutenberg eBook of The "Ladies of Llangollen"

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: The "Ladies of Llangollen"

Author: John Hicklin

Release date: March 13, 2007 [eBook #20810]

Language: English

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE "LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN" ***

Transcribed from the 1847 Thomas Catherall edition by David Price, email ccx074@pglaf.org. We would like to thank Llangollen Library, Denbighshire, for allowing access to the copy from which this transcription was made.

**THE "LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN,"
AS SKETCHED BY MANY HANDS;
WITH NOTICES OF
OTHER OBJECTS OF INTEREST
IN
"THAT SWEETEST OF VALES."**

BY JOHN HICKLIN,
EDITOR OF THE "CHESTER COURANT," AUTHOR OF THE "HISTORY OF CHESTER CATHEDRAL," ETC. ETC.

CHESTER:
THOMAS CATHERALL, EASTGATE ROW;
LONDON: WHITTAKER & CO.; ACKERMANN & CO., STRAND;
DUBLIN: T. CRANFIELD.

MDCCCXLVII.

TO
MISS LOLLY AND MISS ANDREW,
THE
PROPRIETORS AND OCCUPIERS OF PLAS NEWYDD.
THE FAMED RETREAT OF
"The Ladies of Llangollen,"
THE FOLLOWING PAGES
ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY
THEIR OBEDIENT SERVANT,

p. ii

THE PUBLISHER.

THE LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN.

p. 1

From the early age of Cambrian history, when the peerless beauty of the high-born Myfanwy Fechan awoke the passion and the poesy of her admiring bard, Howel ap Einion Llygliw, down to the modern days of the more humble, but not less renowned maiden, "Sweet Jenny Jones;" Llangollen, "that sweetest of vales," seems to have been associated with recollections of tender and romantic interest. Our narrative, however, albeit it relates to the Ladies of Llangollen, refers

not to whispered vows and moonlight serenades between gallant chiefs and damsels of noble birth; nor to sentimental tales of love in a cottage; but it is rather devoted to the records of a friendship, whose incidents and eccentricities have engaged the attention of many eminent *literati* and tourists. Most persons who take any interest in the scenery or topography of North Wales, have either seen or read of that singular residence, Plas Newydd, at Llangollen, for so many years the home of Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby.

p. 2

About the year 1778, these ladies, impelled by a desire to lead a secluded life of celibacy, forsook the gay and fashionable circles in which they had moved; and in their search for a fitting spot, on which to pass their days together in devoted friendship to each other, and in acts of benevolence and charity to their neighbours, they visited Llangollen. Rambling along this charming locality one balmy evening, when the tranquil beauty of the lovely valley was lighted up by the mild splendour of the moon, their eyes rested upon a cottage that stood on a gentle eminence near the village; and there they resolved to fix their abode. They accordingly purchased the estate; built a new cottage on the site of the old one, in a remarkably unique and somewhat grotesque style of architecture; and laid out gardens, pleasure grounds, and rural walks with grottoes, temples, conservatories, rustic bridges, and other accessories for enjoying, in the undisturbed quiet of their own domain, the natural charms of their picturesque retreat. Their mode of life being singular, and their costume still more so (for they assumed a style of head-dress resembling that of men, and always wore long cloth coats, rather like ladies' riding habits), they soon attracted the attention of the many travellers who passed through North Wales; and as they kept up an extensive and active correspondence with several eminent authors and persons of distinction, the "Ladies of Llangollen," for so they were always designated, made a much greater sensation in their seclusion, than many less remarkable persons who are constantly living in the business and bustle of society. Hence many literary pilgrimages were made to the recluses of Plas Newydd; and the "even tenor" of their way was often diversified by the calls of the illustrious, the learned, and the curious; from whom they were as willing to learn what was passing in politics, literature, and general gossip, as were their visitors desirous of having a peep within the charmed circle of this mountain solitude. Their motive for adopting this romantic seclusion is thus stated in "Steward's Collections and Recollections:—

p. 3

"Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby were young ladies of beauty and rank, who loved each other with so true an affection, that they could never bear the afflicting idea of a separation, which the marriage of either might occasion. They therefore resolved on lives of celibacy, and refusing many handsome offers, and remaining deaf to the persuasions of their friends, they retired to the beautiful Yale of Llangollen, to enjoy the happiness of each other's company, that as their friendship began in infancy, it might be perpetuated through life. The traveller, in passing by the celebrated abode of these interesting women, must contemplate with a sigh that excessive friendship which could tear from the bosom of society two of its brightest ornaments, to bury them in the depths of seclusion:—

'Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.'

p. 4

"It is on this subject Miss Seward employs her poetical talents, in her well-known poem of 'Llangollen Vale.'—The following is an account of these celebrated ladies, extracted from a periodical work published in the year 1796. 'Miss Butler and Miss Ponsonby are now retired from the society of men into the wilds (!) of Llangollen in Wales, where they have resided seventeen years. Miss Butler is of the Ormond family, and had five offers of marriage, all of which she rejected. As Miss Ponsonby, her particular friend and companion, was supposed to have been the bar to her matrimonial union, it was thought proper to separate them, and Miss Butler was confined. The two ladies, however, found means to elope together, but being soon overtaken, were brought back to their respective relations. Many attempts were again made to draw Miss Butler into marriage, though in vain; not many weeks after, the ladies eloped again, each having a small sum with her. The place of their retreat was confided to a female servant of the house. Here they lived many years, unknown to any of the neighbouring villagers, otherwise than by the appellation of the 'Ladies of the Vale.' No persuasions could ever get them from this retreat. A lady from Ireland told the collector of these articles the following anecdote relative to these female friends:—An Irish nobleman (Lord Fingal) happening to be travelling in the neighbourhood of Llangollen Vale, and having heard much of Lady E. Butler and Miss Ponsonby, felt a desire to see and converse with them. But how he could obtain this pleasure (as the ladies seldom or never saw company, and were fond of a recluse life) was the question. At length he bethought himself of a method the most likely to answer the purpose, without the appearance of forwardness or indelicacy. He sent his servant with the following verbal message:—'Lord Fingal, travelling in this neighbourhood, sends his respectful compliments to Miss Butler and Miss Ponsonby, and informs them that he sets out to-morrow morning for Ireland, and would be happy to be the bearer of any commands of theirs to that country.' This message had the effect which his lordship desired. He received, in return, a kind and friendly invitation to take tea with the ladies, which he, of course, accepted with much pleasure.—Lord Fingal (the collector's informant added) was peculiarly charmed with the amiable behaviour of these interesting enthusiasts of

p. 5

friendship. He found not in them the gravity, formality, and demureness of virgin recluses, but the ease of liveliness, and animated conversation of happy, cultivated, and polished minds."

On June 2, 1829, death severed the faithful friendship which had existed for so many years between the eccentric residents at Plas Newydd, by removing from this earthly scene Lady Eleanor Butler, who had attained the advanced age of 90; and in December 9, 1831, Miss Ponsonby, who was seldom seen (except by her domestics) after the decease of her attached companion, was called to her "long home." They are both buried in the church-yard of Llangollen, where a stone monument is erected to their memory. On this record of mortality are inserted the following memorials:—

p. 6

Sacred to the Memory of
The Right Honourable
LADY ELEANOR CHARLOTTE BUTLER,
Late of Plâs Newydd in this Parish.
Deceased 2nd June, 1829,
Aged 90 Years.

Daughter of the Sixteenth, Sister of the Seventeenth
EARLS OF ORMONDE AND OSSORY.

Aunt to the late, and to the present
MARQUESS OF ORMONDE.

Endeared to her friends by an almost unequalled excellence of heart, and by manners worthy of her illustrious birth, the admiration and delight of a very numerous acquaintance from a brilliant vivacity of mind undiminished to the latest period of a prolonged existence. Her amiable condescension & benevolence secured the grateful attachment of those by whom they had been so long and so extensively experienced. Her various perfections crowned by the most pious and cheerful submission to the Divine Will, can only be appreciated, where it is humbly believed, they are now enjoying their Eternal Reward, and by her of whom for more than fifty years, they constituted that happiness, which through our Blessed Redeemer, she trusts will be renewed when THIS TOMB shall have closed over its latest tenant.

"Sorrow not as others who have no hope."

1 Thess. Chap. 4. v. 13.

SARAH PONSONBY
departed this Life
on the 9th December, 1831, Aged 76.

p. 7

She did not long survive her beloved Companion LADY ELEANOR BUTLER, with whom she had lived in this valley for more than half a century of uninterrupted friendship. "But they shall no more return to their House, neither shall their place know them any more." Job, Chap. 7. v. 10.

Reader pause for a moment and reflect not on the uncertainty of human life but upon the certainty of its termination, and take comfort from the assurance that "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him, shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. Chap. 9. v. 27, 28.

On the same tombstone is also the following inscription, to the memory of a faithful servant, who accompanied "the Ladies" from Ireland, the country of their nativity.

In Memory of
MRS. MARY CARRYL,
Deceased 22 November, 1809.

This Monument is erected by Eleanor Butler and Sarah
Ponsonby of Plas Newydd in this Parish.

*Released from Earth and all its transient woes,
She whose remains beneath this Stone repose,
Steadfast in faith resigned her parting breath,
Looked up with Christian joy and smiled in death.
Patient, Industrious, Faithful, Generous, Kind,
Her Conduct left the proudest far behind;
Her Virtues dignified her humble birth,
And raised her mind above this sordid earth.
Attachment (Sacred bond of grateful breasts)
Extinguished but with life, this Tomb attests,
Reared by Two Friends who will her loss bemoan,
Till with her ashes—Here shall rest their own.*

In 1832, the home of "the Ladies of Llangollen" was sold by auction, by the late renowned

p. 8

“knight of the hammer,” Mr. George Robins, who put forth the following advertisement, in his characteristic style of decorative description.

“IN NORTH WALES.
* * * * *
Particulars and Conditions of Sale
OF THE
LADY ELEANOR BUTLER AND MISS
PONSONBY’S
LITTLE PARADISE
AT LLANGOLLEN,
Of which a more enlarged description will appear
on the other side.
IT IS ALL FREEHOLD,
And it need hardly be remarked that it is in the
most favoured Spot in
NORTH WALES;
Which will be Sold by Auction
BY
* * * * *
MR. GEORGE ROBINS,
* * * * *
AT THE AUCTION MART, LONDON,
On THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 1832, at Twelve o’Clock,
IN ONE LOT,
BY DIRECTION OF THE EXECUTORS.

May be viewed only with Tickets, and Particulars had Twenty-one Days prior to the Sale at the Lion Hotel, Shrewsbury; the Inns at Llangollen, and Corwen; the Great Hotel, Bangor; Waterloo, Liverpool; York House, Bath; and at Mr. GEORGE ROBINS’S Offices, London.

p. 9

N.B. The appropriate Furniture, Service of Plate, Elegancies of the Chateau, extensive Library of Books, and all the valuable Appendages, will be submitted to Public Competition the latter End of the Month of July, by Direction of the Executors.

PARTICULARS, &c.

Mr. ROBINS is not a little proud that it hath been his good fortune to be selected by the Executors of the Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby to direct the sale of their far-famed Domicile. He feels that an apology will be due to all those who are familiar with its beauties and peculiarities, for the very imperfect recital which follows, while those who are yet to be gratified with the sight of it, may imagine he has drawn some little upon “Fancy’s sketch.” There is nothing of pretension in its outward form, it indicates but moderately the comfort that presides within, inasmuch as will be found congregated all the *agremens* pertaining to more consequential habitations. Considerable tact is conspicuous everywhere; but none more unequivocally displayed than in the lightsome little Dining Room, contrasted with the gloomy, yet superior grace of the Library, into which it opens. This room is fitted up in the Gothic style, the Windows are of ancient painted glass *“shedding their dim religious light.”*

p. 10

THE SALOON OF THE MINERVAS

Is the repository of the choice Library. The auxiliary Offices are very commensurate, the grounds are disposed in such good order as is the natural consequence of pure taste, the Kitchen Garden is neatness itself, and the Fruit trees are of the rarest and finest sort, and luxuriant in their produce. Many and shaded

GRAVEL WALKS ENCIRCLE THIS ELYSIUM,

Which is adorned with curious and rare Shrubs and Flowers. It is nothing in extent but

EVERYTHING IN GRACE AND BEAUTY,

United with a great variety of foliage. Upon the Freehold is a considerable quantity of valuable Timber which overhangs

A DEEP AND HOLLOW GLEN;

In its entangled bottom, a frothing brook leaps and clamours o’er the rough stones in its channel towards

THE VALE OF LLANGOLLEN.

To speak of the latter would be quite superfluous, few, if any, are unacquainted with the wildness and surpassing beauty of the most admired spot in North Wales. Its contiguity to the little romantic village, giving the opportunity either to indulge in the gaiety of this place, or recreate in retirement, (as shall seem best suited to varied inclination), there are fortunately both auxiliaries to this scene (it had almost been said of enchantment). The verdant Lawns, dotted with rare plants, the scenic beauties, and the woodland scenery combined, plead in extenuation of this lofty

p. 11

tone. The whole is encompassed by rich meadows, wearing a park-like appearance; held with the freehold, which is limited to less than Five Acres. A truly beautiful Portico of carved Oak leads to this

DOMICILE OF COMFORT.

The whole lower Story of which, on the outside, is covered with the richest carved Oak, and within which will be found a Dining Room 15 feet by 15, with handsome Chimney Piece, and carved Oak Doors and Wainscoting.

A Library, 13 feet by 14 feet 6 inches, with Three Gothic Windows of carved Oak and splendid stained Glass, exhibiting old Armorial Bearings, and forming a Bow Window, handsome Chimney Piece of yellow and white marble, and Recesses fitted up with Gothic Book Cases, and the Doors and Architrave of old carved Oak.

An admirably constructed Kitchen, carved Oak Doors and Window Facia, a very handsome carved Oak Screen and Seat, Grate Ovens, Hearths, Stew Holes, &c.

A Housekeeper's Room, beautifully fitted up with carved Oak Presses, Oak Doors and Window Frames.

A large Larder with fixed Tables, Hooks, &c. together with an ample Cellar, both so situated as to be perfectly cool in the hottest weather. p. 12

Wash-house, Scullery, Coal-house, &c., a Staircase of carved Oak, Walls and Ceilings of the same beautifully ornamented Gothic Architecture. This is one of the most beautiful things that can be conceived.

FIRST FLOOR.

An excellent Bed Room, fixed Book Shelves and carved Oak Door, Chimney Piece and Window Facia, an excellent best Bed Room, Oak Doors, fancy Cornice, and cross Ceiling Beams of carved Oak, a very handsome Chimney Piece of the same.

A light Dressing Room and Closet, Gothic carved Oak Doors, &c. fitted up with Book Shelves. Over the Staircase a commodious Pantry, Shelves and Presses for China and Plate, Oak Doors of carved open work. The Sashes of the Windows are all Metal.

ATTIC STORY.

Two good Servants' Rooms, and a Store Room. The Premises consist of

FOUR GARDENS

In the best order, and well stocked with all kinds of Fruit Trees, Vegetables, and Flowers.

FIVE PASTURE FIELDS

Of the richest Land, well timbered, Rustic Bridges, Summer Houses of richly carved Oak, and Rustic Seats, Cow and Calf-house, Garden-house, Yard, Store-house, &c. An excellent Engine Pump. p. 13

This celebrated Place was the Property, and for more than half a Century the Residence of the late LADY ELEANOR BUTLER AND MISS PONSONBY. It is situated upon a Piece of rich Table Land, just above the Port and Market-town of Llangollen, and commands a View of the Valley of the Dee, both up and down, is close to Valle Crucis, Dinas Brân, and many of the most beautiful Scenes in Wales. The Taxes are very light.

CONTENTS OF THE FREEHOLD PART OF THE ESTATE.

	A. R. P.
House, Offices, and Shrubbery	0 3 14
Flower Garden	0 0 27
Garden House, Court and Poultry ditto	0 0 12
Part of Lawn	0 3 8
Nursery	0 0 20
Field	2 0 12

THE LANDS CONTIGUOUS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1A. 1R. 20P. part of Lawn; and 3R. 26P. of Gardens and Shrubbery, held from year to year, from Ousley Gore, Esq., at a rent of £

3R. 13P. part of Lawn and Flower Garden, held in same manner from Hon. F. West, at a rent of £

4A. 1R. 30P. being two Fields, the Glen, and a Kitchen Garden, from Hon. Mr. Mostyn, yearly at a rent of £

p. 14

1A. 2R. 16P. a Field from J. Dicken, Esq. at a yearly rent of £

TOTAL QUANTITY, 13 ACRES 38 PERCHES."

* * * * *

The exaggerated style of this ornate announcement will, doubtless, excite a smile, and we suspect that some of our readers, who know the locality, will laugh outright at the very fanciful stretch of imagination, which led the worthy auctioneer to speak of the "*Port of Llangollen.*"

The purchasers of the property were Miss Lolly and Miss Andrew, the present owners and occupiers of Plas Newydd, between whom and the late "*Ladies of Llangollen,*" an intimate friendship existed.

In August 1832, Mr. Robins offered by public auction the furniture and fittings of this unique villa; the following is a copy of the advertisement, and the catalogue of the sale extended over seventy quarto pages.

* * * * *

"LLANGOLLEN, NORTH WALES.
MR. GEORGE ROBINS

Has the pleasure most respectfully to announce to the Nobility, Lovers of the Fine Arts, and those who delight in objects of interest, and indeed to the Public generally, that having sold "*PLAS NEWYDD,*" he is instructed by the Executors of

THE LADY ELEANOR BUTLER
AND
MISS PONSONBY,

p. 15

To offer for UNRESERVED COMPETITION, at the Domicile so long hallowed as the abode of friendship,

On MONDAY, the 13th day of AUGUST, 1832,
And many succeeding Days, at Eleven for Twelve
o'clock precisely, on each day,

THE FOLLOWING
INTERESTING AND VALUABLE PROPERTY,
APPERTAINING TO THE RESIDENCE,

And which for extent, variety and novelty, forms a most brilliant Assemblage, certainly unexampled in the Annals of Auctions; it having been congregated by those highly talented Ladies, the fair "*MISTRESSES OF PLAS NEWYDD,*" during a series of 50 years, aided by their joint taste, and at considerable expense, including the appropriate

FURNITURE OF THE CHATEAU,

Comprising a Drawing Room suite in curtains, glasses, centre, card, and occasional tables; ottomans, sofas, couches, chairs of various descriptions, yet in unison, whatnots, cheffioneers; the dining room is very complete; there are excellent dining tables, chairs, sideboard, writing tables and library chairs.

A RANGE OF BOOKCASES & MANY OBJECTS,
ELABORATELY CARVED IN OAK;
A STRONG BOX OF GREAT ANTIQUITY, AND
CARVED,

p. 16

It was once the Property of his late Royal Highness

THE DUKE OF YORK.

The Furniture of the Bed Chambers and Offices is of a corresponding character;

EXCELLENT TABLE AND BED LINEN,

The equipments of the Garden are of a very superior description;
A VARIETY OF SEATS, CURIOUS ETRUSCAN FLOWER VASES, GARDEN IMPLEMENTS, ETC.

A GREEN HOUSE OF GREAT BEAUTY,
ORNAMENTED WITH PAINTED AND STAINED GLASS;

An extensive Collection of Plants, Dairy and Brewing Utensils;
SERVICES OF CHINA AND GLASS,
In complete sets, for the Table, the Dejeuné, the Dessert, &c. &c.

SIDEBOARD OF PLATE,

Comprising many rare chased and antique items; dishes and covers, salvers, waiters, tea and coffee equipages, candlesticks, liquor and cruet frames, spoons and forks;

AND A VARIETY OF USEFUL ARTICLES FOR THE SIDEBOARD AND TABLE.

JEWELLERY AND ELEGANCIES,

Presenting many pleasing and valuable Ornaments for the person, in necklaces, ear-rings, crosses and brooches, most of them inclosing the hair of the donors, particularly one of great interest, possessing

p. 17

A LOCK OF "MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS" HAIR.

INTERESTING MISCELLANIES, CURIOSITIES AND RELICS, VIZ.

Very fine missals, beautifully illuminated; autographs of numerous renowned personages, particularly a letter by "Charles the First" to Lady Fisher, from Whitehall, during his confinement; presentation snuff boxes, many of value, and most with lines of dedication; relics of great antiquity, and many of modern date, presented by travellers, forming altogether a Museum of great interest and amusement.

SEVERAL REMARKABLY FINE CAMEOS AND INTAGLIOS.

A MODEL OF THE WARWICK VASE, IN SILVER,

Richly Chased, most exquisite in Workmanship and perfectly Unique.

Many curious models, bronze busts, and in Sevres bisquit; MUSICAL AND OTHER ELEGANT CLOCKS, in ormolu; China essence, and flower vases; a large Æolian harp, telescopes, microscopes, &c.

AN EXTENSIVE AND VALUABLE LIBRARY OF BOOKS,

Comprising many Thousand Volumes, elegantly bound in folio, quarto, and octavo, (large and small.)

A SERIES OF ETCHINGS.
THE POWER AND PROGRESS OF GENIUS,

EXECUTED BY

THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH,

AND PRESENTED BY HER

TO THE PRINCESS AMELIA;

AN AUTOGRAPH LETTER FROM
THE PRESENT KING OF FRANCE,

Accompanying the Memoirs du Duc de Montessor, in scarlet and morocco, a present from His Majesty to Lady Butler and Miss Ponsonby; with many other contributions and valuable presents from persons of the highest rank and literary acquirements to these highly gifted Ladies.

PICTURES, VALUABLE DRAWINGS, AND PRINTS,

In frames and in portfolios, comprising a collection the most choice and valuable, many by the first Artists of the day, Portraits of Kings, exalted and renowned Characters, and Views of the most celebrated Scenery of various Countries. A small quantity of

RARE WINES AND LIQUEURS;

Viz., Old Port, Sherry, Madeira, Lisbon, Bucellas, Vidonia, Maraschino, Noyeau, Eau de la Reine, and other estimable Liqueurs.

*** The entire Sale will be on View at the Chateau from the 4th to the 13th of August.

The CATALOGUES will be ready Three Weeks prior to the Sale; and may be had at 3s. each, at the Villa; Phillips's Hotel, and the King's Head, Llangollen; the Lion, Shrewsbury; the Owen Glendower, Corwen; the Great Hotel, at Bangor; the Waterloo Hotel, Liverpool; the Hen and Chickens, Birmingham; York Hotel, Bath; of Mr. Guernon, Molesworth-street, Dublin, and at Mr. GEORGE ROBINS' Offices, Covent Garden."

p. 19

* * * * *

The present occupiers were also purchasers of many of the rare "curiosities and relics."

We shall now proceed to cite the descriptions which have been put upon record by several distinguished and popular authors, relative to the "Ladies of Llangollen."

It appears from Volume VI. of the published Letters of the late Miss Anna Seward, that a friendly intimacy was cultivated between that clever *literateur* and the recluses of Plas Newydd; and it would seem from her correspondence, that their tastes were very comprehensive and multifarious; poetry and politics, music and mystery, tragedy and tattle, being alike acceptable.

In a letter addressed to Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby, under date Lichfield, October 4, 1802, Miss Seward exclaims:—

“Ah! dearest ladies, it is under the pressure of a severe cold, fierce cough, and inflamed lungs, that I address you. A duty so delightful had, but for this incapacitating malady, been earlier paid.

“I have to thank dear Miss Ponsonby for a manuscript of many verses, which she had the goodness to make for me in hours so engrossed, amid engagements so indispensable. I had the honour to receive it as I was stepping into the chaise which was to convey Mrs. Smith and myself far from that Edenic region where we had recently passed so many happy hours; from those bowers in Llangollen Vale, whence the purest pleasures have so often flowed to my heart and mind, as from a full and overflowing fountain.”

p. 20

From Lichfield, Nov. 9, 1802, Miss Seward discourses to Miss Ponsonby on modern tragedy, and concludes with the following bit of “blue-stocking gossip:”—

“Though I know her not, I am pleased that Mrs. Spencer has had the good fortune to interest and delight you; for I am always desirous that men of genius should not do what they are so prone to do, marry every-day women.

“Naughty brook, for having behaved outrageously again! That little stream of the mountain is a true spoiled child, whom we love the better for its faults, and for all the trouble and alarm they occasion. You see I presume to involve myself, as if, in some sort, the interesting little virago belonged to me. Certainly it is my peculiar pet amongst your scenic children, dear to my taste, as they are beautiful; to my heart as being yours.”

In a letter from Lichfield, June 13, 1805, Miss Seward begins:—

“With a trembling hand, my beloved Miss Ponsonby, do I take up the pen to thank you for a thrice kind letter. It had not remained several weeks unacknowledged, but for this terrible malady of the head, which has oppressed me with so much severity during the interim. I think it must soon lay me low. Not at my time of life does the constitution, pushed from its equipoise by long enduring disease, regain it amid the struggles.

p. 21

“Immediately on receiving your last, I sent for Madoc; by far the most captivating work of its genuinely inspired author.”

In the same letter the following passage occurs:—

“Our young friend Cary has published his translation of Dante’s Inferno. It is thought the best which has appeared, and the sale goes on well. He presents a copy to yourself and Lady Eleanor, and I trust you will receive it soon.”

After some literary disquisitions on the Inferno, the Lay of the Last Minstrel, and Madoc; and an allusion to King George’s visit to Lichfield, the letter thus concludes:—

“Present me devoutly to your beloved Lady Eleanor. Most interesting is your description of that visit, mutually paid to that desolate and silent Dinbren. How worthy of yourselves that hour of consecration, with all its tributary sighs! Too happy were the days and weeks which I passed beneath its roof, and in its beautiful and sublime environs, to permit such revisitation from me.

“It would break my heart amid its present consciousness, spread over with a dark and impervious pall, which can never be drawn away.

p. 22

“Dear, and amiable Miss Ponsonby, farewell.”

From Lichfield, October 31st, 1805, we have another letter to Miss Ponsonby, with the following tremendous opening:—

“Nothing, my dear Madam, is so common as hypocrisy and treachery where property is concerned; but a greater excess of them never poured their dark currents from the vulgar heart, than in those circumstances which your last letter narrates.

“Thus ever be extortionate villany baffled—and long unclouded be the peace which succeeds to that attempted injury. I cannot express how much I am obliged that you took the kind trouble of retracing the road of peril, which had so nearly engulfed a scene, whose beauties rise perpetually in my sleeping and waking dreams.”

What ever could have happened at Plas Newydd to excite so grand a burst of tragic passion: here *is* matter for curious speculation! Then Miss Seward runs into a not very wise dissertation on politics; then reverts to literary subjects, of which Horace Walpole’s genius is the chief topic; bemoans her own dizziness of the head; has another touch at Mr. Pitt; and finally ejaculates “Adieu, dearest Madam! Your beloved Lady Eleanor will accept my affectionate devoirs!” Why did not Miss Seward go to Llangollen, to end her days in peace?

"Oswestry, Sept. 4th. 1820.

"The dear inseparable inimitables, Lady Butler and Miss Ponsonby, were in the boxes here on Friday. They came twelve miles from Llangollen, and returned, as they never sleep from home. Oh, such curiosities! I was nearly convulsed. I could scarcely get on for the first ten minutes after my eye caught them. Though I had never seen them, I instantaneously knew them. As they are seated, there is not one point to distinguish them from men: the dressing and powdering of the hair; their well-starched neckcloths; the upper part of their habits, which they always wear, even at a dinner-party, made precisely like men's coats; and regular black beaver men's hats. They looked exactly like two respectable superannuated old clergymen; one the picture of Boruwlaski. I was highly flattered, as they never were in the theatre before.

"The packets now sail at seven in the morning; all *day*-work instead of night, which is delightful; and the weather is heavenly. People are here extremely hospitable; but, of all days in the year, Mr. Ormsby Gore went to Carnarvon assizes (being high sheriff) the day before I arrived. He only returned yesterday; and almost forced me away from the inn. I, however, could not conveniently go there, but have been to call this morning. Such a place!

p. 24

"By the by, have you any magnolias in the grounds? if not, get me one or two. I saw a Portugal laurel, only four years old, full half the size of that great beauty at Lord Mansfield's; pray have one or two of them placed by themselves on our new lawn.

"I have to-day received an invitation to call, if I have time as I pass, at Llangollen, to receive in due form, from the dear old gentlemen called Lady Butler and Miss Ponsonby, their thanks for the entertainment I afforded them at the theatre."

"Porkington, Oct. 24th.

"Well, I have seen them, heard them, touched them. The pets, "*the ladies*," as they are called, dined here yesterday—Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby, the curiosities of Llangollen mentioned by Miss Seward in her letters, about the year 1760. I mentioned to you in a former letter the effect they produced upon me in public, but never shall I forget the first burst yesterday upon entering the drawing-room: to find the dear antediluvian darlings, attired for dinner in the same manifold dress, with the Croix de St. Louis, and other orders, and myriads of large brooches, with stones large enough for snuff-boxes, stuck in their starched neckcloths! I have not room to describe their most fascinating persons. I have an invitation from them, which I much fear I cannot accept. They returned home last night, fourteen miles, after twelve o'clock. They have not slept one night from home for above forty years. I longed to put Lady Eleanor under a bell-glass, and bring her to Highgate for you to look at."

p. 25

In August 1825, Sir Walter Scott visited Llangollen, and the account of his interview with the famed "ladies of the vale," is given with much humour and smartness by Mr. Lockhart, in his interesting Memoirs of the immortal "Author of Waverley."—

"Our progress through North Wales produced nothing worth recording, except perhaps the feeling of delight which everything in the aspect of the common people, their dress, their houses, their gardens, and their husbandry, could not fail to call up in persons who had just been seeing Ireland for the first time; and a short visit (which was, indeed, the only one he made) to the far-famed "ladies" of Llangollen. They had received some hint that Sir Walter meant to pass their way; and on stopping at the inn, he received an invitation so pressing, to add one more to the long list of the illustrious visitors of their retreat, that it was impossible for him not to comply. We had read histories and descriptions enough of these romantic spinsters, and were prepared to be well amused; but the reality surpassed all expectation.

"An extract from a gossiping letter of the following week will perhaps be sufficient for Llangollen.

"Elleray, August 24.

p. 26

*** "We slept on Wednesday evening at Capel Curig, which Sir W. supposes to mean the Chapel of the Crags; a pretty little inn in a most picturesque situation certainly, and as to the matter of toasted cheese, quite exquisite. Next day we advanced through, I verily believe, the most perfect gem of a country eye ever saw, having almost all the wildness of Highland backgrounds, and all the loveliness of rich English landscape nearer us, and streams like the purest and most babbling of our own. At Llangollen your papa was waylaid by the celebrated 'Ladies'—viz. Lady Eleanor Butler and the Honourable Miss Ponsonby, who having been one or both crossed in love, forswore all dreams of matrimony in the heyday of youth, beauty, and fashion, and selected this charming spot for the repose of their now time-honoured virginity. It was many a day, however, before they could get implicit credit for being the innocent friends they really were, among the people of the neighbourhood; for their elopement from Ireland had

been performed under suspicious circumstances; and as Lady Eleanor arrived here in her natural aspect of a pretty girl, while Miss Ponsonby had condescended to accompany her in the garb of a smart footman in buckskin breeches, years and years elapsed ere full justice was done to the character of their romance. [26] We proceeded up the hill, and found everything about them and their habitation odd and extravagant beyond report. Imagine two women, one apparently seventy, the other sixty-five, dressed in heavy blue riding habits, enormous shoes, and men's hats, with their petticoats so tucked up, that at the first glance of them, fussing and tottering about their porch in the agony of expectation, we took them for a couple of hazy or crazy old sailors. On nearer inspection they both wear a world of brooches, rings, &c., and Lady Eleanor positively *orders*—several stars and crosses, and a red ribbon, exactly like a K.C.B. To crown all, they have crop heads, shaggy, rough, bushy, and as white as snow, the one with age alone, the other assisted by a sprinkling of powder. The elder lady is almost blind, and every way much decayed; the other, the *ci-devant* groom, in good preservation. But who could paint the prints, the dogs, the cats, the miniatures, the cram of cabinets, clocks, glass-cases, books, bijouterie, dragon-china, nodding mandarins, and whirligigs of every shape and hue—the whole house outside and in (for we must see everything to the dressing-closets), *covered* with carved oak, very rich and fine some of it—and the illustrated copies of Sir W.'s poems, and the joking simpering compliments about Waverley, and the anxiety to know who McIvor really was, and the absolute devouring of the poor Unknown, who had to carry off, besides all the rest, one small bit of literal *butter* dug up in a Milesian stone jar lately from the bottom of some Irish bog. Great romance (*i.e.* absurd innocence of character) one must have looked for; but it was confounding to find this mixed up with such eager curiosity, and enormous knowledge of the tattle and scandal of the world they had so long left. Their tables were piled with newspapers from every corner of the kingdom, and they seemed to have the deaths and marriages of the antipodes at their fingers' ends. Their albums and autographs, from Louis XVIII. and George IV., down to magazine poets and quack-doctors, are a museum. I shall never see the spirit of blue-stockings again in such perfect incarnation. Peveril won't get over their final kissing match for a week. Yet it is too bad to laugh at these good old girls; they have long been the guardian angels of the village, and are worshipped by man, woman, and child about them."

p. 27

p. 28

In July, 1828, the charming vale of Llangollen was visited by a German Prince (Puckler-Muskau of Prussia), who has thus left on record the impressions which his excursion in that vicinity excited:

"The most beautiful reality, however, awaited me this morning in Wales. The vision of clouds seemed to have been the harbinger of the magnificence of the vale of Llangollen, —a spot which, in my opinion, far surpasses all the beauties of the Rhine-land, and has, moreover, a character quite its own, from the unusual forms of the peaked tops, and rugged declivities of its mountains. The Dee, a rapid stream, winds through the green valley in a thousand fantastic bendings, overhung with thick underwood. On each side high mountains rise abruptly from the plain, and are crowned with antique ruins, modern country-houses, manufactories, whose towering chimneys send out columns of thick smoke, or with grotesque groups of upright rocks. The vegetation is everywhere rich, and hill and vale are filled with lofty trees, whose varied hues add so infinitely to the beauty and picturesque effect of a landscape. In the midst of this luxuriant nature, arises, with a grandeur heightened by contrast, a single long, black, bare range of mountains, clothed only with thick, dark heather," and from time to time skirting the high road. This magnificent road, which from London to Holyhead, is as even as a 'parquet,' here runs along the side of the left range of mountains, at about their middle elevation and following all their windings; so that in riding along at a brisk trot or gallop, the traveller is presented at every minute with a completely new prospect; and without changing his position, overlooks the valley now before him, now behind, now at his side. On one side is an aqueduct of twenty-five slender arches, a work which would have done honour to Rome. Through this a second river is led over the valley and across the Dee, at an elevation of an hundred and twenty feet above the bed of the natural stream. A few miles further on, the little town of Llangollen offers a delightful resting place, and is deservedly much resorted to.

p. 29

"There is a beautiful view from the churchyard near the inn: here I climbed upon a tomb, and stood for half an hour enjoying with deep and grateful delight the beauties so richly spread before me. Immediately below me bloomed a terraced garden, filled with vine, honeysuckle, rose, and a hundred gay flowers, which descended to the very edge of the foaming stream. On the right hand, my eye followed the crisped waves in their restless murmuring course through the overhanging thicket; before me rose two lines of wood, divided by a strip of meadow-land filled with grazing cattle; and high above all, rose the bare conical peak of a mountain crowned by the ruins of the old Welsh castle Dinas Brân, or the Crow's Fortress. On the left, the stone houses of the town lie scattered along the valley; the river forms a considerable waterfall near the picturesque bridge, while three colossal rocks rise immediately behind it like giant guards, and shut out all the more distant wonders of this enchanting region.

p. 30

"Before I left Llangollen I recollected the two celebrated ladies who have inhabited this

valley for more than half a century, and of whom I had heard once as a child, and again recently in London. You have doubtless heard your father talk of them;—‘*si non, voilà leur histoire.*’ Fifty-six years ago, two young, pretty and fashionable ladies, Lady Eleanor Butler, and the daughter of the late Lord Ponsonby, took it in their heads to hate men, to love only each other, and to live from that hour in some remote hermitage. The resolution was immediately executed; and from that time neither lady has ever passed a night out of their cottage. On the other hand, no one who is presentable travels in Wales unprovided with an introduction to them. It is affirmed that the ‘scandal’ of the great world interests them as much as when they lived in it; and that their curiosity to know what passes has preserved all its freshness. I had compliments to deliver to them from several ladies, but I had neglected to furnish myself with a letter. I therefore sent my card, determined if they declined my visit, as I was led to fear, to storm the cottage. Here, as elsewhere, however, in England, a title easily opened the door, and I immediately received a gracious invitation to a second breakfast. Passing along a charming road, through a trim and pretty pleasure-ground, in a quarter of an hour I reached a small but tasteful gothic cottage, situated directly opposite to Dinas Bran, various glimpses of which were visible through openings cut in the trees. I alighted, and was received at the door by the two ladies. Fortunately I was already prepared by hearsay for their peculiarities; I might otherwise have found it difficult to repress some expression of astonishment. Imagine two ladies, the eldest of whom, Lady Eleanor, a short robust woman, begins to feel her years a little, being now eighty-three; the other, a tall and imposing person, esteems herself still youthful, being only seventy-four. Both wore their still abundant hair combed straight back and powdered, a round man’s hat, a man’s cravat and waistcoat, but in the place of ‘inexpressibles,’ a short petticoat and boots: the whole covered by a coat of blue cloth, of a cut quite peculiar,—a sort of middle term between a man’s coat and a lady’s riding-habit. Over this, Lady Eleanor wore, first, the grand cordon of the order of St. Louis across her shoulder; secondly, the same order around her neck; thirdly, the small cross of the same in her button-hole, and ‘*pour comble de gloire,*’ a golden lily of nearly the natural size, as a star,—all, as she said, presents of the Bourbon family. So far the whole effect was somewhat ludicrous. But now, you must imagine both ladies with that agreeable ‘*aisance,*’ that air of the world of the ‘*ancien regime,*’ courteous and entertaining, without the slightest affectation; speaking French as well as any Englishwoman of my acquaintance; and above all, with that essentially polite, unconstrained, and simply cheerful manner of the good society of that day, which, in our serious hardworking age of business, appears to be going to utter decay. I was really affected with a melancholy sort of pleasure in contemplating it in the persons of the amiable old ladies who are among the last of its living representatives; nor could I witness without lively sympathy the unremitting, natural and affectionate attention with which the younger treated her somewhat infirmer friend, and anticipated all her wants. The charm of such actions lies chiefly in the manner in which they are performed,—in things which appear small and insignificant, but which are never lost upon a susceptible heart.

p. 31

p. 32

p. 33

“I began by saying that I esteemed myself fortunate in being permitted to deliver to the fair recluses the compliments with which I was charged by my grandfather, who had had the honour of visiting them fifty years ago. Their beauty indeed they had lost, but not their memory: they remembered the C--- C--- very well, immediately produced an old memorial of him, and expressed their wonder that so young a man was dead already. Not only the venerable ladies, but their house, was full of interest; indeed it contained some real treasures. There is scarcely a remarkable person of the last half century who has not sent them a portrait or some curiosity or antique as a token of remembrance. The collection of these, a well-furnished library, a delightful situation, an equable, tranquil life, and perfect friendship and union,—these have been their possessions; and if we may judge by their robust old age and their cheerful temper, they have not chosen amiss.”

During the summer of 1833, Miss Catherine Sinclair, the clever authoress of “*Modern Accomplishments,*” made an excursion through Wales, and thus describes her visit to Plas Newydd:—

“No eyes but those of a poet are worthy to behold the celebrated valley of Llangollen, where we next proceeded, after having drawn largely on the firm of Messrs. Wordsworth, Cowper, Thomson, and Co. for language to pay a due tribute of admiration to this surpassing scene,—but who has a genius equal to the majesty of nature? I thought of the Mahometan who turned back when he observed some such rich and fertile plain, saying, he had been only promised one Paradise, and did not wish to enjoy it upon earth. Instead of following his example, however, we advanced, trying to fancy ourselves on the banks of the Rhine, to which so many travellers have compared this beautiful valley. Pray employ your unrivalled taste in imagining the rugged mountains,—the sparkling river,—the ancient trees,—the smiling cottages,—the daisied meadows, and the fertile gardens, all grouped or scattered in the way you think best,—and invention can suggest nothing more perfect.

p. 34

“The valley of Llangollen belonged once to the far-famed Owen Glendower, mentioned in Shakespeare’s Plays, as ‘not in the roll of common men.’ His palace stood near this

formerly, and here he maintained a war during twelve years against Henry IV., being a keen adherent of Richard's; besides which, a private feud against Lord Grey de Ruthyn whetted his exertions. Peace was, however, about to be concluded in 1415, between the Welsh chief and the English king, on very honourable terms, when, as we frequently observe, if any one attains his utmost earthly desires, Owen died. But though the vale of Llangollen boasts of such a hero, its chief celebrity arises from a pair of heroines; and we lost no time in doing homage to their memories, by scrambling our way up a steep ascent to that well-known cottage, where the late Lady Eleanor Butler and the Honourable Miss Ponsonby, during more than half a century, devoted their long lives so romantically to friendship, celibacy, and the knitting of blue stockings. It seems only astonishing that this is so very rare an occurrence, for any one with a friend so richly endowed as my accomplished correspondent, might feel safe from the possibility of tiring, and might like to connect her name with so charming a scene and with so romantic a story. Two successors to these fair hermits have already sprung up, as substitutes for the original occupants, following the same exclusive plan of life; and in a moment of enthusiasm I felt much inclined to knock at the door and ask if they would make it a trio. In the case of Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby, very transient visits only were acceptable, and even their own names remained long concealed, as the friends eloped clandestinely without confiding to any one, except a maid servant, the place of their retreat. The cause of this very close seclusion having been variously conjectured, excited much gossiping curiosity at the time; but from whatever cause the hermitage originated, here, embowered in roses, they 'made a solitude and called it peace.' After discussing the Ladies of Llangollen, our thoughts naturally diverged into a general consideration, whether the greatest number of voluntary recluses have relinquished social intercourse on account of disappointed affection, mortified vanity, or mistaken devotion.

p. 35

p. 36

"What a beau ideal of earthly felicity springs up to the imagination in taking a glance at the beautiful cottage of Llangollen! all the every-day vexations and vulgar cares of life, seem there swept aside, and nothing left for the inhabitants but to lead a life of graceful leisure, tying up carnations, engrafting roses, gazing at the splendid scenery around, and talking in perpetual ecstasies about flowers and perfumes. Almost every grown-up person entertains, at the out-set of life, notions of happiness with a cottage nearly similar to that which a little girl enjoys with her first doll,—dressing it up, altering, arranging, painting, and spoiling it; but this hermitage really is a singular looking toy. The building is long and low, so completely cased in richly-carved oak, that it might be mistaken for an enormous wardrobe. The garden slopes upwards from the river Dee, and is greatly embellished by a splendid beech hedge about forty feet high; several charming little summer houses are sprinkled about the grounds; and in one most romantic arbour, overlooking the fine cascade, we found a volume lying open on the seat, which proved to be Southey's Roderick; suitable reading for such a scene of poetical beauty.

"An attempt at embellishment has been made, by placing a stuffed bear near the house, probably in imitation of the Zoological Gardens; but the idea is rather a failure, and would appear more suitable over the door of a perfumer's shop, to intimate the presence of bear's grease. A little gim-crack model of a wooden house is also visible, by way of an ornament, stuck on the summit of a wooden pillar, but the effect is disproportioned to all surrounding objects, even more than the designs on Chinese paper; where men of six feet high are represented entering mansions half their own height, and birds may be seen flying larger than either the houses or their inhabitants. In a cottage built of oak and roofed with thatch, it would be very desirable that the inhabitants should have some taste for the study of entomology, as they might find an inexhaustible hunting-field among the wooden walls and creepers. It has been disputed whether more inconvenience is endured from the extreme cold of an English winter, or from the swarms of insects inevitably encountered during the heat of an Italian summer; but those who inhabit this 'Fairy Palace of the Vale,' might be able from experience at home, to decide the question. They could afford sufficient employment for an entire pin-manufactory, to supply impaling machines for all the specimens of insects that might be collected and classified here. The birds too, were so vociferous, that we seemed standing in an aviary, and the locality would not at all have suited Lady --, who scolded her gardener for 'letting the sparrows make such a noise under her windows in the morning.' It is much to be lamented how many 'harmonious blackbirds' annually fall victims to the preservation of cherries; and though the 'four-and-twenty baked in a pie,' might be rather too loud when they all 'began to sing,' yet a few in a garden are so enlivening and delightful, that it would be better never to taste fruit again than to lose such a concert of natural melody as we enjoyed at Llangollen."

p. 37

p. 38

Mr. Roscoe, in his remarkably interesting "Wanderings in North Wales," is less enthusiastic than some tourists on the subject of our present narrative; he says:—

"Plas Newydd, for so many years the residence of the fair recluses of the lovely vale of Llangollen, stands on a gentle eminence close to the town, ornamented with a carved railing in front, and decorated with grotesque gables and ornaments. The present proprietors are also two maiden ladies, who seem disposed to perpetuate the conventual celebrity of this place; and are certainly not less urbane than the former

possessors, in permitting visitors to gratify their taste in the inspection of the beautiful grounds. Attended by my *cicerone*, the gardener, I passed from one object of natural beauty to another,—the vale of Pen-gwern surrounded by part of the Berwyn chain, the woody dingle, and brawling brook of the Cyflymed, with many others, which are supplied with the most gratifying conveniences for their leisurely inspection. After all, I must confess, filled as was my mind by the impressions of the majestic scenes with which it had become familiar, the miniature landscapes supplied by the situation of Plas Newydd, fell far short of the anticipation I had formed, and they forcibly recalled the emotion I remembered to have felt after viewing the mimic hills and vales, and passionless cascades of the poet Shenstone, in his retreat at the Leasowes, near Hagley.”

p. 39

Miss Costello, who made the tour of North Wales in 1844 is even less complimentary, and is thus smartly satirical in the peculiarities of the departed “Ladies:”—

“One of the great attractions of Llangollen a few years ago was the romantic story attached to the place and the residence there of Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby. Pilgrimages were made to this shrine of friendship, and the ladies were overwhelmed with visitors, and their cottage filled with offerings. Their tomb is now in the churchyard, and their cottage let; and very few persons recollect much about them, or feel any interest in a sentimental history, which belonged to the last century, and now can only excite a smile at the eccentricity of its heroines, who, under pretence of retiring from society, made themselves conspicuous throughout the country. Most of their accumulated stores were sold by public auction, on the death of the last of the friends, and the cottage, as it now stands, is by no means either a rural or picturesque object. It is covered inside and out with carved wood, some of value, and some quite worthless; and all that remains of the taste of the former proprietors merely proves how little was required to please fifty years ago. The trees, planted by the friends, are now grown high, and shut out all view of the country; in fact, the whole place has a vulgar, common-place appearance, and excited in my mind no sort of interest, nor was my indifference agreeably dispelled by the view of an engraving, hung up in the little boudoir, representing the two ladies sitting at their table covered with curiosities, both dressed in masculine habits, and both frightfully ugly. These portraits, it seems, were taken by an amateur, by stealth, as neither of ‘The Ladies of Llangollen’ would consent to sit, and a lamentable record is it which creates most unpleasing sensations to the lover of the graceful, beautiful, and venerable.

p. 40

“The ‘ladies’ were, although singular in the extreme, remarkably charitable and considerate of the necessities of their neighbours, and their loss has been greatly felt. They seemed vain and pompous, but accomplished and intellectual, and were a strange compound of wisdom and folly, pride and condescension.”

The celebrated Madame de Genlis, in an entertaining miscellany, under the title of “Souvenirs de Felicie L---,” has given the following graphic narrative of “The Fair Recluses of Llangollen:”—

“During my residence in England (says she), nothing struck me so much as the delicious cottage of Llangollen, in North Wales. It is not a little extraordinary, that a circumstance so singular and remarkable as that connected with this retreat, should hitherto have escaped the notice of all modern travellers. The manner in which I became acquainted with it was this:—During our long-stay at Bury, a small company of five or six persons, including ourselves, met every evening from seven till half-past ten o’clock. We diverted ourselves with music and conversation, so that the time past very agreeably. One night friendship happened to be the subject of conversation, and I declared that I would with pleasure undertake a long journey to see two persons who had long been united by the bonds of genuine friendship. ‘Well, Madam,’ replied Mr. Stuart (now Lord Castlereagh), go to Llangollen; you will there see a model of perfect friendship, which will afford you the more delight, as it is exhibited by two females who are yet young and charming in every respect. Would you like to hear the history of Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby?’—‘It would give me the greatest pleasure.’—‘I will relate it to you.’ At these words the company drew nearer to Mr. Stuart, we formed a little circle round him, and after recollecting himself a few moments, he thus began his narrative:—

p. 41

“Lady Eleanor Butler, was born in Dublin. She was left an orphan while in her cradle; and possessing an ample fortune, together with an amiable disposition and a beautiful person, her hand was solicited by persons belonging to the first families in Ireland. At an early age she manifested great repugnance to the idea of giving herself a master. This love of independence, which she never dissembled, did no injury to her reputation; her conduct has always been irreproachable, and no female is more highly distinguished for sweetness of temper, modesty, and all the virtues which adorn her sex. In tender infancy a mutual attachment took place between her and Miss Ponsonby, by an accident which made a deep impression on their imagination. They had no difficulty to persuade themselves that heaven had formed them for each other; that is, that it had designed each of them to devote her existence to the other, so that they might glide together down the stream of life, in the bosom of peace, the most intimate friendship, and delicious independence. This idea their sensibility was destined to

p. 42

realize. Their friendship gradually grew stronger with their years, so that at seventeen they mutually engaged never to sacrifice their liberty, or to part from each other. From that moment they formed the design of withdrawing from the world, and of settling for good in some sequestered retreat. Having heard of the charming scenery of Wales, they secretly absconded from their friends for the purpose of fixing upon their future residence. They visited Llangollen, and there, on the summit of a mountain, they found a little detached cottage, with the situation of which they were delighted. Here they resolved to form their establishment. Meanwhile the guardians of the young fugitives sent people after them, and they were conveyed back to Dublin. They declared that they would return to their mountain as soon as they were of age. Accordingly, at twenty-one, in spite of the entreaties and remonstrances of their relatives and friends, they quitted Ireland for ever, and flew to Llangollen. Miss Ponsonby is not rich, but Lady Eleanor possesses a considerable fortune. She purchased the little hut and the property of the mountain, where she built a cottage, very simple in external appearance, but the interior of which displays the greatest elegance. On the top of the mountain she has formed about the house a court and flower-garden; a hedge of rosebushes is the only enclosure that surrounds this rural habitation. A convenient carriage-road, the steepness of which has been diminished by art, was carried along the mountain. On the side of the latter some ancient pines of prodigious height were preserved; fruit trees were planted, and a great quantity of cherry trees in particular, which produce the best and finest cherries in England. The two friends likewise possess a farm for their cattle, with a pretty farm-house and a kitchen-garden at the foot of the mountain. In this sequestered abode these two extraordinary persons, with minds equally cultivated, and accomplishments equally pleasing, have now resided ten years, without ever having been absent from it a single night. Nevertheless they are not unsociable, they sometimes pay visits to the neighbouring gentry, and receive with the greatest politeness travellers on their way to or from Ireland, who are recommended to them by any of their old friends.'

p. 43

"This account strongly excited my curiosity, and produced the same effect on Mademoiselle d'Orleans and my two young companions. We determined the same night to set out immediately for Llangollen, by the circuitous route of Brighton, Portsmouth, and the Isle of Wight. It was the latter end of July when we arrived at Llangollen. This place has not the rich appearance of the English villages in general, but nothing can equal the cleanliness of the houses, and among the lower classes of any country this is an infallible proof of abundance. Llangollen, surrounded with woods and meadows, clothed with the freshest verdure, is situated at the foot of the mountain belonging to the two friends, which there forms a majestic pyramid covered with trees and flowers. We arrived at the cottage, the only object of our journey, an hour before sunset.

p. 44

"The two friends had received in the morning by a messenger the letter which Mr. Stuart had given me for them. We were received with a grace, a cordiality, and kindness, of which it would be impossible for me to give any idea. I could not turn my eyes from those two ladies, rendered so interesting by their friendship and so extraordinary on account of their way of life. I perceived in them none of that vanity which takes delight in the surprize of others. Their mutual attachment, and their whole conduct evince such simplicity, that astonishment soon gives way to softer emotions; all they do and say breathes the utmost frankness and sincerity. One circumstance which I cannot help remarking is, that after living so many years in this sequestered retreat, they speak French with equal fluency and purity. I was likewise much struck with the little resemblance there is between them. Lady Eleanor has a charming face, embellished with the glow of health; her whole appearance and manner announce vivacity and the most unaffected gaiety. Miss Ponsonby has a fine countenance, but pale and melancholy. One seems to have been born in this solitude, so perfectly is she at her ease in it; for her easy carriage shews that she has not retained the slightest recollection of the world and its vain pleasures. The other, silent and pensive, has too much candour and innocence for you to suppose that repentance has conducted her into solitude, but you would suppose that she still cherishes some painful regrets. Both have the most engaging politeness, and highly-cultivated minds. An excellent library, composed of the best English, French, and Italian authors, affords them an inexhaustible source of diversified amusement and solid occupation; for reading is not truly profitable except when a person has time to read again.

p. 45

"The interior of the house is delightful on account of the just proportion and distribution of the apartments, the elegance of the ornaments and furniture, and the admirable view which you enjoy from all the windows; the drawing-room is adorned with charming landscapes, drawn and coloured from nature, by Miss Ponsonby. Lady Eleanor is a great proficient in music; and their solitary habitation is filled with embroidery by them both, of wonderful execution. Miss Ponsonby, who writes the finest hand I ever saw, has copied a number of select pieces in verse and prose, which she has ornamented with vignettes and arabesques, in the best taste, and which form a most valuable collection. Thus the arts are cultivated there with equal modesty and success, and their productions are admired with a feeling that is not experienced elsewhere; the spectator observes with delight that so much merit is secure in this peaceful retreat from the shafts of satire and envy, and that talents unaccompanied

p. 46

with ostentation and pride, have there never coveted any suffrages but those of friendship.

"This evening was a scene of enchantment for me; not one painful reflection disturbed its felicity. I retired to rest, but my imagination was so fully occupied with what I had seen and heard, that my thoughts kept me for a long time awake. At length, I was just falling asleep, when I was roused by the most melodious sounds. I listened in great astonishment; it was not music, but an indistinct and celestial harmony which penetrated my very soul. I discovered that it was produced by a violent wind which had just then arisen; my ear distinguished the distant noise and the whistling usually heard on such occasions, but the winds changing their nature as they approached this asylum of peace and friendship, formed only the most enchanting harmony as they met its trees and its walls. I was strongly disposed to believe in prodigies; but nevertheless I was determined to investigate the nature of this, but I durst not rise for fear of waking Mademoiselle d'Orleans, who was extremely fatigued with her journey, and slept in a bed close by mine. The tempest suddenly ceased, and the harmonious sounds appeared to be carried to a distance by the retiring winds. I raised my head towards the heavens to catch the last tones of this celestial concert, which seemed to be lost in the clouds. I listened with transport like St. Cecilia; if I had had my harp in my hands I should certainly have dropped it; at that moment all terrestrial music appeared totally spiritless and insipid.

p. 47

"Next morning the whole mystery was explained. On opening my window I found in the balcony an Eolian harp, an instrument with which I was then unacquainted, and which, when the wind blows upon it, produces such enchanting sounds.

"I walked out the whole forenoon with the two friends; nothing can equal the charms of the surrounding scenery, and of the prospects which the mountain whose summit they occupy commands; at this elevation they appear the queens of all the beautiful country at their feet. Towards the north they have a view of the village and of a wood; to the south a long river washes the foot of the mountain, and fertilizes meadows of prodigious extent, beyond which is discovered an amphitheatre of hills, covered with intermingled trees and rocks. In the midst of this wild scenery rises a majestic tower, which might be taken for the Pharos of this coast, but is only the ruins of a magnificent castle, once the residence of the prince of the country. This solitary region was doubtless at that time flourishing and populous, now it is abandoned to nature alone; nothing is now to be seen in it but herds of goats, and a few scattered herdsmen sitting upon the rocks and playing upon the Irish harp. Facing this rustic and melancholy scene the two friends have raised a verdant seat, shaded by two poplars, and thither they told me they often repair in summer to read together the poems of Ossian.

p. 48

"The ride from Wrexham to Llangollen is remarkable for the sublimity and awful grandeur of the prospects; the most prominent feature in the landscape is a high and stupendous chain of mountains, sometimes swelling into the clouds, or gently shelving into the vallies, around which they form a wide amphitheatre; and by their elevations afford shelter, and tend to fertilize the vales at their bases. I was led to exclaim—

'I love thy mountain's giant forms!
Darkly clad in gath'ring storms;
I love thy rocks, down whose steep sides,
With foaming, dizzying crash,
Thunder the torrent's tan-brown tides,
And roaring whirlwinds dash.'

p. 49

"For,

'Mid clouds and crags, dark pools and mountains drear,
The wild-wood's silence, and the billow's roll,
Great Nature rules, and claims with brow austere,
The shudd'ring homage of the inmost soul.'

"From the craggy sides of the rocks descend the tributary streams to supply the river which divides the dales, and which dashes its foaming impetuous course along the banks, often edged with broken crags and grey rocks, or is seen winding in a deeper and more peaceful stream through dark and silent groves, spreading their autumnal shades over the surface, or often glistening through fields of verdure and cultivated spots of ground; here foaming and chafing some dark ruin's tottering base, there reflecting the modern villa or the humble hamlet in its silver bosom, and by the variety of scenery giving new beauty to the whole.

"The cottages, bridges, villas, towers, rocks, and dark ruins of Gothic antiquity, are in unison with the surrounding objects, and the attention is frequently called from beholding the beauties of nature to pause on the works of art. In the centre of the long valley which stretches to Llangollen, is erected a most stupendous aqueduct, by which the canal is conveyed from a lofty hill over a wide chasm in the mountains; the length of this amazing work of art and human industry, is, I was informed, three hundred yards, the aqueduct composed of cast iron, is supported on fifty stone pillars and arches, and the view of this immense pile bestriding the valley is grand beyond description, and

p. 50

contributes much to heighten the effect produced by the whole scenery; for here grandeur and sublimity sit enthroned on the mountains, and solitude and human privacy, with their attendant charms, have fixed their abode in the vallies.

“The beauties of the Vale of Llangollen certainly exceed every idea I had formed of their grandeur, and on my arrival at the inn in the village, the muse embodied the following

“LINES ON VISITING LLANGOLLEN.

‘Much have I heard, Llangollen, of thy scenes,
And the wild landscapes of thy mountain greens,
The rushing streams, that dash thy rocks among,
Thy snow-topt mountains, thy wild harper’s song,
Thy fruitful vallies deep, where oft between
Rise hamlets, rocks, and tow’rs to grace the scene.
Where solitude and calm contentment dwell,
And contemplation roves each rocky dell,
Or climbs the snow-topt mountain’s cloudy height
To watch the sinking shades of evening light;
To view the foaming torrent’s misty shower,
To list’ the brooding tempest’s rising roar,
Mark the blue mists the silvery moonbeams shroud,
Or golden ev’ning edge the dusky cloud;
Yet, till this hour my doubting heart has thought
Thy glowing scenes by fancy’s pencil wrought,
Or drest in poetry’s enchanting hues,
And all the flatt’ring colours of the muse;
But if in winter’s storms thy beauties charm,
If the cold breast thy varying landscapes warm,
In summer’s smiles it surely stands confest,
That he who draws thee fairest paints thee best.’”

p. 51

Having thus seen the various amusing and interesting records, which so many of our most popular authors have given to the world, respecting the once famous “Ladies of Llangollen,” curiosity induced us to pay a visit to this much frequented abode of ancient friendship. Accordingly in March, 1847, we made an excursion, in company with our respected Publisher, to the celebrated retreat of Plas Newydd; and through the favour of Mr. Jacques, an intelligent and hospitable gentleman resident at Pen-y-bryn, Llangollen, we were introduced to the present owners, Miss Lolly and Miss Andrew, and met with a most courteous reception. Their manners are easy, dignified, and lady-like; totally free from all affectation, and in nowise marked by that frigid stateliness and pedantic formality, which a censorious world proverbially attributes to a state of elderly maidenhood. In all its characteristic particulars, the cottage remains in the same condition as in the days of Lady Eleanor and Miss Ponsonby; but its present possessors have introduced several judicious alterations in the interior, which, though carried out in strict harmony with the general design of its former occupants, exhibit an improved taste and a cultivated judgment. The house is delightfully situated, and is well-adapted to realize the notion of the poet—

p. 52

“‘Tis pleasant from the loop-holes of retreat
To look at such a world; to see great Babel
And not feel the crush;”

but the site is not well chosen for developing the many charming prospects which the vale of Llangollen affords; and, indeed, the entire arrangements, both of dwelling and pleasure grounds, seem to be suggestive rather of another poetical maxim in great favour with anchorites and recluses—“Retire, the world shut out.” We cannot agree with Miss Seward, who describes this hermitage as “a retreat which breathes all the witchery of genius, taste, and sentiment.” It is rather fantastical than tasteful, and savours more of eccentricity than sentiment. In the Gothic entrance, there are undoubtedly many fine specimens of carved wood-work, some of which we suspect were the plunder of despoiled convents and churches during the continental wars of the last century; but classical, mythological, and scripture subjects are intermingled in odd confusion, and with “most admired disorder.” The rooms are small and comfortable, with very low ceilings; the prospect from the dining-room is flat and tame; but several of the miniature views, as seen through small openings of the painted window in the library, are remarkably picturesque, and reveal themselves with a pleasing effect to the eye of the artist or the admirer of natural scenery. The cottage yet contains many articles of furniture and choice rarities, which belonged to the former owners; whose portraits adorn the fanciful little boudoir. Disguised as they are by the strangeness of their costume, we should not like to hazard any opinion of our own as to their personal charms; especially as Miss Seward has been so minutely particular in telling us “all about them.” That clever and amusing gossip says of the “ladies,” whom she rhapsodizes as “the enchantresses” of Plas Newydd—

p. 53

“Lady Eleanor is of middle height, and somewhat beyond the *embonpoint* as to plumpness; her face round and fair, with the glow of luxuriant health. She has not fine features, but they are agreeable; enthusiasm in her eye, hilarity and benevolence in her

smile. Exhaustless is her fund of historic and traditionary knowledge, and of every thing passing in the present eventful period. She expresses all she feels with an ingenuous ardour, at which, the cold-spirited beings stare. I am informed that both these ladies read and speak most of the modern languages. Of the Italian poets, especially of Dante, they are warm admirers. Miss Ponsonby, somewhat taller than her friend, is neither slender nor otherwise, but very graceful. Easy, elegant, yet pensive, is her address and manner.

“Her voice, like lovers’ watched, is kind and low.”

A face rather long than round, a complexion clear but without bloom, with a countenance which, from its soft melancholy, has a peculiar interest. If her features are not beautiful, they are very sweet and feminine. Though the pensive spirit within permits not her lovely dimples to give mirth to her smile, they increase its sweetness, and, consequently, her power of engaging the affections. We see, through her veil of shading reserve, that all the talents and accomplishments which enrich the mind of Lady Eleanor, exist, with equal powers, in this her charming friend.”

p. 54

We commend these pen and ink portraits to the notice of our readers without controversy; and the more especially, as they may gratify their curiosity still more in this matter, by purchasing from our Publisher a well-executed engraving representing, with all due fidelity, excellent likenesses of the “Ladies of Llangollen;” each, as *Hamlet* would say, “in her habit as she lived.”

Among the treasured relics which the cottage now contains, we were shewn the veritable crutch-headed walking stick, on which Lady Eleanor used to support her aged steps, when rambling through the village on errands of mercy, or sauntering among the pleasure grounds of her mountain-home; and we also saw and handled the broad-brimmed hat worn by Miss Ponsonby, whose head we should judge to have been small and finely formed. O for the genius of a Seward, to have written an ode to that venerable head-dress! and in good truth, one might almost fancy we heard the spirit of that amiable enthusiast, bidding us, like *Gesler’s* captain, “bow down and honour it.” Seriously, every little particular connected with the history and habits of the departed “Ladies” is so anxiously prized at Llangollen, that we felt very grateful for the prompt kindness with which the present worthy possessors of the unique residence contributed to our information and amusement. We may therefore tell, for the advantage of such of our readers as associate their notions of “old maids” with an affectionate regard for the canine and feline tribes, that Lady Eleanor Butler possessed a favourite dog of the turnspit-breed, called “Trust;” that Miss Ponsonby had a small white poodle, named “Busy;” and that they had a joint interest in a popular cat, answering to the name of “Meggins;” all of which four-footed domestics were especial pets in their garden walks or at their quiet fire-side.

p. 55

The little domain of Plas-Newydd, if situated in some localities, would be esteemed a miniature paradise, but planted as it is amidst so many scenes of surpassing loveliness, its limited and somewhat formal characteristics suffer by comparison. The arrangement of the ground might have suited the peculiar tastes and habits of the “recluses;” but it is certainly very far inferior to the picturesque effect, which landscape gardening in the present day could *there* produce. The prettiest portions of these much-vaunted precincts are the shady knoll, overhanging a romantic glen, down which a brawling streamlet leaps its frothing course over a craggy bed; and the rural walk by the gothic fount, into which a pellucid mountain-rill pours its refreshing waters. Among the remembrances of former days, is the effigy of a guardian ‘lion,’ (which, under the name of a ‘bear,’ has been noted by an author whom we have quoted;) the melancholy quadruped is now considerably “used up,” and excites a laugh at the burlesque on the monarch of the forest, which his attenuated figure and shrivelled hide present. Plas-Newydd is unquestionably a delightful residence; and its adjacent pleasure grounds and gardens afford most inviting facilities for those who love to make a practical study of horticulture; to ruminate amidst its tranquil retreats over the published works of some favourite authors; or to “meditate,” like the patriarch, at “even-tide” on the wonders and glories of Eternal Power. Apart therefore from the romantic recollections, with which the singular history of the “Ladies of Llangollen” has invested this fair spot of earth, it presents to the tourist certain attractions, which the reflective explorer of the lovely vallies of the Dee should not neglect. We heard from some of the older inhabitants several anecdotes of the benevolence and charity of the departed “Ladies,” whose memory is most affectionately cherished in the neighbourhood. It has been said that on religious subjects, these ancient friends were divided in opinion; one being a Roman Catholic and the other a Protestant; but the parish clerk, an intelligent old man who knew them well, assured us that they both regularly attended the services in the Church of Llangollen, and received the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, both there, and at their own cottage during the last illness of Lady Eleanor Butler, from the vicar. With all their eccentricity, their attachment to each other must have been of a pure, unchanging, and fervent character; else would they never have forsworn in the full bloom of youth and beauty, the gay fascinations or the elegant ease of courtly life for the dull monotony of seclusion and celibacy. Both in feeling and intellect, Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby were no common persons; it may of a truth be said of them, that “they lived to a good old age and died honoured and respected;” and if ever the beings of a brighter and holier sphere are permitted to cast back occasional glimpses on the world which they have left, their spirits may sometimes hover over the sacred spot where their ashes repose, and haunt the moon-lit banks of the silvery Dee, in its murmuring current by the lowly church-yard of Llangollen.

p. 56

p. 57

The picturesque ruins of this venerable structure stand in a lovely and sequestered valley, about two miles from Llangollen, and are approached by as delightful and inviting road as ever rambler need wish to tread. The Rev. John Williams, in his learned description of this ancient monastery, says:

“The abbey was founded about the year 1200, [58a] and in conformity with the rule [58b] of the Cistercian fraternity, was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The names by which it was generally known to the Welsh had, however, a particular reference to the locality where it was situated: thus, ‘Monachlog y Glyn,’ ‘Monachlog Glyn Egwestl,’ ‘Monachlog Pant y Groes.’ And in Latin it was called ‘Abbatia [58c] de Valle Crucis,’ and ‘Abbatia de Llanegwest.’

“The remains of the abbey extant at the present day consist of the church, and of a building on the southern side, part of which seems to have formed the Abbot’s lodgings, and part to have been the refectory, with the dormitory above. The church is a cruciform building, of which the northern side has been almost entirely destroyed, and without any vestige remaining of its roof, except in the eastern aisle of the southern transept. In the midst of these hallowed precincts the rubbish is heaped up to a great height, caused, probably, by the fall of the northern wall, and by the remains of the roof:—the pavement, if there be any of it subsisting, is entirely concealed, and ash-trees grow luxuriantly upon the mounds, adding to the picturesque effect of the ruin, but saddening the heart of the antiquary. We are unable, therefore, to determine the number of piers that formed the side of the nave; but from the space between the western end and the central piers, at the intersection of the transepts, we should conjecture this number to have been three, thus making four arches on either side. The choir was without aisles, but each transept had one on the eastern side, which seems to have been used as a chapel. The oldest portion of the church is the choir; the eastern end of which was lighted by three bold and lofty lancet arches, rising from no great height above the level of the pavement to half the altitude of the building, and by two proportionably smaller lancets above. In the apex of the gable was probably a small aperture, but of this no trace remains; the gable is mutilated, and we judge only from the analogy of the western end of the nave. In each of the northern and southern walls of the choir is a lancet window; and two similar windows, but lower in height, occur in each of the eastern walls of the transept aisles. High up in the southern wall, also, is to be seen a small loophole, communicating with a passage which leads over the vaulting of the southern transept aisle to the abbatial building adjoining the church. This passage is now blocked up, but it is conjectured to have served either as a closet wherein the abbot could attend service privately, or else as a place of confinement or penitence for the monks. The architecture of this portion of the church corresponds in its style with the date of the foundation,—the commencement of the thirteenth century: the lancets, with their mouldings, are strictly of that date, and the capitals of the shafts, which are worked with great boldness, are of the late Norman period, rather than of that which is called Early-pointed.”

p. 59

p. 60

“Of all that portion of the nave which occurs between the central tower and the western end, nothing remains but the outer wall of the southern aisle; the western end of it, however, still stands, and is a beautiful example of the richest and purest architecture of the middle of the thirteenth century. Over a central doorway, with deeply recessed mouldings and shafts, and with a bold dog-tooth ornament, each projection of which is elegantly carved into four converging fleurs-de-lys, occur three lofty windows, the central one taller than those at its sides—all with remarkably bold splays, both internally and externally, enriched with shafts and mouldings. The central window appears to have been of only one light, though broad, and to have had its arch occupied by a foliation of six cusps, and therefore of seven recesses,—the foliating spaces being solid. The side windows are each of two lights, the principal arch-head being solid, but pierced with a single aperture divided into six foliations. Above these three windows runs a kind of framework, analagous in some respects to that at the eastern end of the choir. The gable is pierced above these windows with a small but beautiful wheel-window of eight pointed compartments, each trifoliated; the divisions being moulded in one order, and converging to a central ring, itself pierced to admit the light. Above all is a square quatrefoliated aperture in the very apex of the gable. On the external face of the western end are two bold buttresses of a single stage, that on the south-eastern side being pierced with loopholes for a circular staircase formed in the thickness of itself and the wall.”

p. 61

The Abbey of Valle Crucis was dissolved in the year 1535, and is said to have been the first of the Welsh monasteries which underwent the doom of abolition.

Romantic Abbey! hallow'd be the rest
Of those, who rear'd thee in this wild green vale
A temple lovely as the place is blest—

And stern as beautiful:—but words would fail
To paint thy ruin'd glories, though the gale
Of desolation sweeps thro' thy hoar pile,
And waves the long grass thro' thy cloisters pale
Where the dark ivy scorns day's garish smile,
And weed-grown fragments crown thy desecrated aisle.

* * * *

How sweet the sounds!—whose soft enchantments rose
'Mid those wild woodlands at the matin prime—
Or when the vesper song at evening's close
Wafted the soul beyond the cares of time,
To that Elysium of a brighter clime
Where thro' heaven's portals golden vistas gleam,
And the high harps of Seraphim sublime
Came o'er the spirit like a prophet's dream,
Till faded earth away on glory's endless beam.

Oft the proud feudal chief, whom human law
Or kingly pow'r could bind not, nor control,
Has paus'd before thy gates in holy awe,
And felt religion's charm subdue his soul—
The heart that joy'd to hear the savage howl
Of battle on the breeze, has soften'd been—
List'ning the hymns of peace that sweetly stole
O'er this lone vale, where fancy's eye hath seen
Forms bright and angel-like glide thro' thy vistas green:

And angel forms here at thy altar knelt,
Fair dames, and gentle maidens whose bright eyes
The sternest heart of warrior-mould could melt,
Soft'ning grim war with gen'rous sympathy—
Pleading, like pity wafted from the skies
To quell the stormy rage of savage man:
And hence the gentle manners had their rise—
Hence knights for lady's praise all dangers ran—
And thus, the glorious age of chivalry began.

The Abbey derives its name (the Vale of the Cross) from a sepulchral monument commonly called "THE PILLAR OF ELISEG," which stands on an ancient tumulus in the middle of this beautifully secluded glen. It was erected by Cyngen ab Cadell Dryrnllug, in memory of his great grandfather Eliseg, whose son Brochmail Ysgythrog, grandfather of the founder of this rude monument of filial veneration, was engaged in the memorable border wars at the close of the sixth century; and was defeated at the Battle of Chester, A.D. 607. During the great rebellion this pillar was thrown down by Oliver Cromwell's "Reformers," who in their fiery zeal for destruction mistook it for a "Popish Cross;" and it remained for more than a century in its broken recumbent condition, when it was restored by the patriotism and intelligence of Mr. Lloyd of Trevor Hall, and replaced upon its pedestal with a suitable memorial to record the fact. It now forms an interesting relic of antiquity, and is probably the oldest British Cross (bearing a carved inscription) which exists in these islands. That said inscription has long been a puzzle to the learned investigator of archaeological remains.

Having wandered through the verdant meads of the "happy valley," the adventurous tourist may probably wish to climb the lofty hill, which is crowned by the romantic ruins of the Castle of Dinas Bran. This memorable fortress of the past, is a remarkable object from all parts of the vale; for whose safety and defence it was long the abode of a line of chiefs renowned in Cambrian lore. The view from the summit is exceedingly picturesque, grand, and imposing; and naturally prompts the exclamation of the Poet of the Seasons—

"Heavens! what a goodly prospect spreads around."

On descending the mountain-path, the traveller may perchance look round for a comfortable resting-place and good refreshment; he will readily find both, either at the Hand, or the King's Head Hotel. In the album of the latter house of entertainment he may also peruse the following bacchanalian effusion in honour of "Llangollen Ale," which he will then be in the mood to enjoy; and as he quaffs this nectar of the valley, he may thus chaunt its praises, if in a convivial humour, to the music of a Welsh harp—

LLANGOLLEN ALE.

While other poets loudly rant
About Llangollen's Vale,
Let me, with better taste, descant
Upon Llangollen Ale.

The daughters of the place are fair,

Its sons are strong and hale:
What makes them so? Llangollen air?
No, no!—Llangollen Ale.

And Nature only beautified
The landscape, to prevail
On travellers to turn aside
And quaff Llangollen Ale.

For though the scene might please at first
As charms would quickly stale;
While he who tastes will ever thirst
To drink Llangollen Ale.

From rock to rock the Dee may roam,
And chafe without avail;
It cannot match its yeasty foam
Against Llangollen Ale.

The umber-tinted trees that crown
Bron-vawr's ridge are pale,
Contrasted with the nutty brown
That tints Llangollen Ale.

Nor is the keep of Dinas-bran,
Though high and hard to scale,
So elevated as the man
Who drinks Llangollen Ale.

Thy shattered arch, beside the way,
Val-crucis, tells a tale
Of monks who sometimes went astray
To quaff Llangollen Ale.

And still upon the saintly spot
The pilgrim may regale
His fainting spirits with a pot
Of good Llangollen Ale.

For though the ancient portress may
Not offer it for sale,
Yet cheerfully to all who pay
She gives Llangollen Ale.

And, Eliseg, thy pillar rude
Is merely—I'll be bail—
A monument to him who brewed
The first Llangollen Ale.

In short, each ruin, stream, or tree,
Within Llangollen's Vale,
Where'er I turn, whate'er I see,
Is redolent of Ale.

Liverpool. R. R.

The convivial disposition of the monks of the "olden time" has always been a favourite theme with our romance writers and "ballad-mongers;" but it would appear from a passage which Mr. Roscoe quotes, that the cowled brethren of Valle Crucis Abbey did not content themselves in their hours of festivity with draughts of "Llangollen Ale." The wealth of the institution, he infers, may be judged of by the magnificent hospitality of the monks, who are described by Owain as having the table usually covered with four courses of meat, served up in silver dishes, with sparkling claret for their general beverage.

"Many have told of the monks of old,
What a saintly race they were;
But 'tis most true, that a merrier crew
Could scarce be found elsewhere;
For they sung and laughed,
And the rich wine quaffed,
And lived on the daintiest cheer.

"And the Abbot meek, with his form so sleek,
Was the heartiest of them all,
And would take his place, with a smiling face,
When the refection bell would call;
And they sung and laughed,
And the rich wine quaffed,
Till they shook the olden hall."

VIEWS, &c.
LATELY PUBLISHED
BY THOMAS CATHERALL,
EASTGATE ROW, CHESTER.

* * * * *

PORTRAITS
OF THE
RIGHT HON. LADY ELEANOR BUTLER AND MISS PONSONBY,
"THE LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN."

Price 2s. 6d.

* * * * *

PLAS NEWYDD,
NEAR LLANGOLLEN,
The Seat of the late Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby.

Price 1s. 6d.

* * * * *

VALLE CRUCIS ABBEY,
NEAR LLANGOLLEN.

Price 1s. 6d.

* * * * *

PILLAR OF ELISEG,
NEAR VALLE CRUCIS ABBEY.

Price 1s.

* * * * *

A GREAT VARIETY OF
LITHOGRAPHIC VIEWS IN CHESTER AND NORTH WALES,
CONSTANTLY ON SALE.

Footnotes

[26] "It is, I suppose, needless to say, that the editor is far from vouching for the accuracy of these details. The letter in the text gives the gossip as it was heard at the time."

[58a] According to Tanner. Bishop Godwin saith, A.D. 1100, which is decidedly wrong, if Madog was the founder.

[58b] Tanner's Notitia Monastica.

[58c] Sive Monasterium.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE "LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN" ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1

through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER

THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these

requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.