



***LEIGH
HUNT***

***THE TOWN: ITS
MEMORABLE
CHARACTERS
AND EVENTS***

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EAN 8596547050384

DigiCat, 2022

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INTRODUCTION.

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In one of those children's books which contain reading fit for the manliest, and which we have known to interest very grave and even great men, there is a pleasant chapter entitled *Eyes and no Eyes, or the Art of Seeing*.^[1] The two heroes of it come home successively from a walk in the same road, one of them having seen only a heath and a hill, and the meadows by the water-side, and therefore having seen nothing; the other expatiating on his delightful ramble, because the heath presented him with curious birds, and the hill with the remains of a camp, and the meadows with reeds, and rats, and herons, and kingfishers, and sea-shells, and a man catching eels, and a glorious sunset.

In like manner people may walk through a crowded city, and see nothing but the crowd. A man may go from Bond Street to Blackwall, and unless he has the luck to witness an accident, or get a knock from a porter's burden, may be conscious, when he has returned, of nothing but the names of those two places, and of the mud through which he has passed. Nor is this to be attributed to dullness. He may, indeed, be dull. The eyes of his understanding may be like bad spectacles, which no brightening would enable to see much. But he may be only inattentive. Circumstances may have induced a want of curiosity, to which imagination itself shall contribute, if it has not been taught to use its eyes. This is particularly observable in childhood, when the love of novelty is strongest. A boy at the Charter House, or Christ Hospital, probably cares nothing for his neighbourhood, though stocked with a great deal that might entertain him. He has been too much accustomed to identify it with his schoolroom. We remember the time ourselves when the only thought we had in going through the metropolis was how to get out of it; how to arrive, with our best speed, at the beautiful vista of home and a pudding, which awaited us in the distance. And long after this we saw nothing in London, but the book-shops which have taught us better.

"I have often," says Boswell, with the inspiration of his great London-loving friend upon him, "amused myself with thinking how different a place London is to different people. They whose narrow minds are contracted to the consideration of some one particular pursuit, view it only through that medium. A politician thinks of it merely as the seat of government in its

different departments; a grazier as a vast market for cattle; a mercantile man as a place where a prodigious deal of business is done upon 'Change; a dramatic enthusiast as the grand scene of theatrical entertainments; a man of pleasure as an assemblage of taverns, &c. &c.; but the intellectual man is struck with it as comprehending the whole of human life in all its variety, the contemplation of which is inexhaustible."

It does not follow that the other persons whom Boswell speaks of are not, by nature, intelligent. The want of curiosity, in some, may be owing even to their affections and anxiety. They may think themselves bound to be occupied solely in what they are about. They have not been taught how to invigorate as well as to divert the mind, by taking a reasonable interest in the varieties of this astonishing world, of which the most artificial portions are still works of nature as well as art, and evidences of the hand of Him that made the soul and its endeavours. Boswell himself, with all his friend's assistance, and that of the tavern to boot, probably saw nothing in London of the times gone by—of all that rich aggregate of the past, which is one of the great treasures of knowledge; and yet, by the same principle on which Boswell admired Dr. Johnson, he might have delighted in calling to mind the metropolis of the wits of Queen Anne's time, and of the poets of Elizabeth; might have longed to sit over their canary in Cornhill with Beaumont and Ben Jonson, and have thought that Surrey Street and Shire Lane had their merits, as well as the illustrious obscurity of Bolt Court. In Surrey Street lived

Congreve; and Shire Lane, though nobody would think so to see it now, is eminent for the origin of the Kit-Kat Club (a host of wits and statesmen,) and for the recreations of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., of Tatler celebrity, at his *contubernium*, the Trumpet.

It may be said that the past is not in our possession; that we are sure only of what we can realise, and that the present and future afford enough contemplation for any man. But those who argue thus, argue against their better instinct. We take an interest in all that we understand; and in proportion as we enlarge our knowledge, enlarge, *ad infinitum*, the sphere of our sympathies. Tell the grazier, whom Boswell mentions, of a great grazier who lived before him—of Bakewell, who had an animal that produced him in one season the sum of eight hundred guineas; or Fowler, whose horned cattle sold for a value equal to that of the fee-simple of his farm; or Elwes, the miser, who, after spending thousands at the gaming table, would haggle for a shilling at Smithfield; and he will be curious to hear as much as you have to relate. Tell the mercantile man, in like manner, of Gresham, or Crisp, or the foundation of the Charter House by a merchant, and he will be equally attentive. And tell the man, *par excellence*, of anything that concerns humanity, and he will be pleased to hear of Bakewell, or Crisp, or Boswell, or Boswell's ancestor. Bakewell himself was a man of this sort. Boswell was proud of his ancestors, like most men that know who they were, whether their ancestors were persons to be proud of or not. The mere length of line flatters the brevity of existence. We must take care how we are proud of those who may not be fit to render us so; but

we may be allowed to be anxious to live as long as we can, whether in prospect or retrospect. Besides, the human mind, being a thing infinitely greater than the circumstances which confine and cabin it in its present mode of existence, seeks to extend itself on all sides, past, present, and to come. If it puts on wings angelical, and pitches itself into the grand obscurity of the future, it runs back also on the more visible line of the past. Even the present, which is the great business of life, is chiefly great, inasmuch as it regards the interests of the many who are to come, and is built up of the experiences of those who have gone by. The past is the heirloom of the world.

Now in no shape is any part of this treasure more visible to us, or more striking, than in that of a great metropolis. The present is nowhere so present: we see the latest marks of its hand. The past is nowhere so traceable: we discover, step by step, the successive abodes of its generations. The links that are wanting are supplied by history; nor perhaps is there a single spot in London in which the past is not visibly present to us, either in the shape of some old buildings or at least in the names of the streets; or in which the absence of more tangible memorials may not be supplied by the antiquary. In some parts of it we may go back through the whole English history, perhaps through the history of man, as we shall see presently when we speak of St. Paul's Churchyard, a place in which you may get the last new novel, and find remains of the ancient Britons and of the sea. There, also in the cathedral, lie painters, patriots, humanists, the greatest warriors and some of the best men; and there, in St. Paul's School, was educated England's epic

poet, who hoped that his native country would never forget her privilege of "teaching the nations how to live." Surely a man is more of a man, and does more justice to the faculties of which he is composed, whether for knowledge or entertainment, who thinks of all these things in crossing St. Paul's Churchyard, than if he saw nothing but the church itself, or the clock, or confined his admiration to the abundance of Brentford stages.

Milton, who began a history of England, very properly touches upon the fabulous part of it; not, as Dr. Johnson thought (who did not take the trouble of reading the second page), because he confounded it with the true, but, as he himself states, for the benefit of those who would know how to make use of it—the poets. In the same passage he alludes to those traces of a deluge of which we have just spoken, and to the enormous bones occasionally dug up, which, with the natural inclination of a poet, he was willing to look upon as relics of a gigantic race of men. Both of these evidences of a remote period have been discovered in London earth, and might be turned to grand account by a writer like himself. It is curious to see the grounds on which truth and fiction so often meet, without knowing one another. The Oriental writers have an account of a race of pre-Adamite kings, not entirely human. It is supposed by some geologists, that there was a period before the creation of man, when creatures vaster than any now on dry land trampled the earth at will; perhaps had faculties no longer to be found in connection with brute forms, and effaced, together with themselves, for a nobler experiment. We may indulge our fancy with supposing that, in those times, light

itself, and the revolution of the seasons, may not have been exactly what they are now; that some unknown monster, mammoth or behemoth, howled in the twilight over the ocean solitude now called London; or (not to fancy him monstrous in nature as in form, for the hugest creatures of the geologist appear to have been mild and graminivorous), that the site of our metropolis was occupied with the gigantic herd of some more gigantic spirit, all good of their kind, but not capable of enough ultimate good to be permitted to last. However, we only glance at these speculative matters, and leave them. Neither shall we say anything of the more modern elephant, who may have recreated himself some thousands of years ago on the site of the Chapter Coffee House; or of the crocodile, who may have snapped at some remote ancestor of a fishmonger in the valley of Dowgate.

By the fabulous writers, London was called Troynovant or New Troy, and was said to have been founded by Brutus, great-grandson of Æneas, from whom the country was called Brutain, or Britain.

For noble Britons sprong from Trojans bold,
And Troynovant was built of old Troye's ashes cold.

(This is one of Spenser's fine old lingering lines, in which he seems to dwell on a fable till he believes it.) Brutus, having the misfortune to kill his father, fled from his native country into Greece, where he set free a multitude of Trojans, captives to King Pandrasus, whose daughter he espoused. He left Greece with a numerous flotilla, and came to an island called Legrecia, where there was a temple of

Diana. To Diana he offered sacrifice, and prayed her to direct his course. The prayer, and the goddess's reply, as told in Latin by Gildas, have received a lustre from the hand of Milton. He gives us the following translation of them in his historical fragment:—

"Diva potens nemorum:"

"Goddess of Shades, and Huntress, who at will
Walk'st on the rolling sphere, and through the deep,
On thy third reign, the earth, look now; and tell
What land, what seat of rest, thou bidst me seek;
What certain seat, where I may worship thee,
For aye, with temples vowed, and virgin quires."

"To whom, sleeping before the altar," says the poet,
"Diana in a vision that night, thus answered:—

"Brute, sub occasum solis:"

"Brutus, far to the west, in th' ocean wide,
Beyond the realm of Gaul, a land there lies,
Sea-girt it lies, where giants dwelt of old:
Now void, it fits thy people. Thither bend
Thy course: there shalt thou find a lasting seat;
There to thy sons another Troy shall rise,
And kings be born of thee, whose dreaded reign
Shall awe the world, and conquer nations bold."[\[2\]](#)

According to Spenser, Brutus did not find England cleared of the giants. He had to conquer them. But we shall speak of

those personages when we come before their illustrious representatives in Guildhall.

This fiction of Troynovant, or new Troy, appears to have arisen from the word Trinobantes in Cæsar, a name given by the historian to the inhabitants of a district which included the London banks of the Thames. The oldest mention of the metropolis is supposed to be found in that writer, under the appellation of *Civitas Trinobantum*, the city of the Trinobantes; though some are of opinion that by *civitas* he only meant their government or community. Be this as it may, a city of the Britons, in Cæsar's time, was nothing either for truth or fiction to boast of, having been, as he describes it, a mere spot hollowed out of the woods, and defended by a ditch and a rampart.

We have no reason to believe that the first germ of London was anything greater than this. Milton supposes that so many traditions of old British kings could not have been handed down without a foundation in truth; and the classical origin of London, though rejected by himself, was not only firmly believed by people in general as late as the reign of Henry the Sixth (to whom it was quoted in a public document), but was maintained by professed antiquaries,—Leland among them.^[3] It is probable enough that, before Cæsar's time, the affairs of the country may have been in a better situation than he found them; and it is possible that something may have once stood on the site of London, which stood there no longer. But this may be said of every other place on the globe; and as there is nothing authentic to show for it, we must be content to take our ancestors as we find them. In truth, nothing is known with certainty of

the origin of London, not even of its name. The first time we hear either of the city or its appellation is in Tacitus, who calls it Londinium. The following list, taken principally from Camden, comprises, we believe, all the names by which it has been called. We dwell somewhat on this point, because we conclude the reader will be pleased to see by how many *aliases* his old acquaintance has been known.

Troja Nova, Troynovant, or New Troy.

Tre-novant, or the New City, (a mixture of Latin and Cornish).

Dian Belin, or the City of Diana.

Caer Ludd, or the City of Ludd.—These are the names given by the fabulous writers, chiefly Welsh.

Londinium.—*Tacitus, Ptolemy, Antoninus.*

Lundiniuin.—*Ammianus Marcellinus.*

Longidinium.

Lindonium, (Λινδόνιον).—*Stephanus* in his Dictionary.

Lundonia.—*Bede.*

Augusta.—The complimentary title granted to it under Valentinian, as was customary with flourishing foreign establishments.

Lundenbyrig.

Lundenberig.

Lundenberk.

Lundenburg.

Lundenwic, or wyc.

Lundenceastre (that is, London-*castrum* or camp).

Lundunes.

Lundene, or Lundenne.

Lundone.—Saxon names. Lundenceastre is Alfred the Great's translation of the Lundonia of Bede.

Luddestun.

Ludstoune.—Saxon translations of the *Caer Ludd* of the Welsh.

Londres.—French.

Londra.—Italian. The letter *r* in these words is curious. It seems to represent the *berig* or *burgh* of the Saxons; *quasi* Londrig, from Londonberig; in which case *Londres* would mean London-borough.

The disputes upon the derivation of the word London have been numerous. In the present day, the question seems to be, whether it originated in Celtic British, that is, in Welsh, and signified "a city on a lake," or in Belgic British (old German), and meant "a city in a grove." The latest author who has handled the subject inclines to the latter opinion.^[4] Mr. Pennant being a Celt, was for the "city on a lake," the Thames in the early periods of British history having formed a considerable expanse of water near the site of the present metropolis. *Llyn-Din* is Lake-City, and *Lun-Den* Grove-City. Erasmus, on the strength of those affinities between Greek and Welsh, which can be found between most languages, fetched the word from *Lindus*, a city of Rhodes; Somner, the antiquary, derived it from *Llawn*, full, and *Dyn*, man, implying a great concourse of people; another antiquary, from *Lugdus*, a Celtic prince; Maitland from *Lon*, a plain, and *Dun* or *Don*, a hill; another, we know not who, referred to by the same author, from a word signifying a ship and a hill^[5]; Camden from *Llong-Dinas*, a City of Ships; and Selden, "seeing conjecture is

free,"[6] was for deriving it from *Llan-Dien*, or the temple of Diana, for reasons which will appear presently. Pennant thinks that London might have been called Lake-City first, and Ship-City afterwards. The opinion of the editor of the *Picture of London* seems most plausible—that Lun-Den, or Grove-City was the name, because it is compounded of Belgic British, which, according to Cæsar, must have been the language of the district; and he adds, that the name is still common in Scandinavia.[7] It may be argued, that London might have existed as a fortress on a lake before the arrival of settlers from Belgium; and that Grove-City could not have been so distinguishing a characteristic of the place as Lake-City, because wood was a great deal more abundant than water. On the other hand, all the rivers at that time were probably more or less given to overflowing. Grove-City might have been the final name, though Lake-City was the first; and the propensity to name places from trees, is still evident in our numerous Woot-tons, or Wood-towns, Wood-fords, Woodlands, &c. But of all disputes, those upon etymology appear the most hopeless. Perhaps the word itself was not originally what we take it to be. Who would suspect the word *wig* to come from *peruke*; *jour* from *dies*; *uncle* from *avus*; or that *Kensington* should have been corrupted by the despairing organs of a foreigner, into *Inhimthorp*?[8]

Whether London commenced with a spot cleared out in the woods by settlers from Holland, (Gallic Belgium,) as conjecture might imply from Cæsar, or whether the germ of it arose with the aboriginal inhabitants, we may conclude

safely enough with Pennant, that it existed in some shape or other in Cæsar's time.

"It stood," says he, "in such a situation as the Britains would select, according to the rule they established. An immense forest originally extended to the river side, and even as late as the reign of Henry II. covered the northern neighbourhood of the city, and was filled with various species of beasts of chase. It was defended naturally by fosses, one formed by the creek which ran along Fleet Ditch; the other, afterwards known by that of Walbrook. The south side was guarded by the Thames; the north they might think sufficiently protected by the adjacent forest."[\[9\]](#)

In this place, then, seated on their hill, (probably that on which St. Paul's Cathedral stands, as it is the highest in London,) and gradually exchanging their burrows in the ground for huts of wicker and clay, we are to picture to ourselves our metropolitan ancestors, half-naked, rude in their manners, ignorant, violent, vindictive, subject to all the half-reasoning impulses—their bodies tattooed like South Sea Islanders—but brave, hospitable, patriotic, anxious for esteem—in short, like other semi-barbarians, exhibiting energies which they did not yet know how turn to account, but possessing, like all human beings, the germs of the noblest capabilities. The accounts given of them by Cæsar and other ancient writers appear to be inconsistent, perhaps because we do not enough consider the inconsistencies of our own manners. According to their statements, the Britons had found out the art of making chariots of war, and yet had not learnt how to convert grain into flour, or to make a solid substance of milk. They rode, as it were, in their coaches, and yet had not arrived at the dignity of bread and cheese. Probably their chariots were magnified both in number and

construction. The scythes which modern fancy has turned into proper haymaking sabres, and which some antiquaries have found so convenient for cutting through "a woody country" (a strange way of keeping them sharp), may have been nothing but spikes. We know not so easily what to say to the bread and cheese, except that in more knowing times people are not always found very ready to improve upon old habits, even with reasons staring them in the face; though, on the other hand, lest habits should be thought older than they are, and reformers be too impatient, it is worth while to consider, not how *long*, but how *short*, a period has elapsed (considering what a little thing a few centuries are in the progress of time) since in the very spot where a Briton sat half-naked and savage, unpossessed of a loaf or a piece of cheese, are to be found gathered together all the luxuries of the globe. Fancy the soul of an ancient Briton visiting his old ground in St. Paul's Churchyard, and hardly staring more at the church and houses, than at the bread in the baker's window, and the magic leaves in that of the bookseller. In one respect, an ancient City-Briton differed *toto cælo* with a modern. He would not eat goose! He had a superstition against it.

London, in Cæsar's time, was most probably a City of Ships; that is to say it traded with Gaul, and had a number of boats on its marshy river. Cæsar's pretence for invading England, was, that it was too good a provider for Gaul, and rendered his conquest of that country difficult. But it is doubtful whether he ever beheld or even alludes to the infant metropolis. His countrymen are supposed to have first taken possession of it about a hundred years afterwards, in

the reign of Claudius. They had heard of a pearl-fishery, says Gibbon. At all events they found oysters; for Sandwich (Rutupium) became famous with them for that luxury.

It is not our design, in this Introduction, to give anything more than a sketch of the rise and growth of the metropolis; we shall leave the rest to be gathered as we proceed. Our intention is to go through London, quarter by quarter, and to notice the memorials as they arise; a plan, which, compared with others (at least if we are to judge of the effect which it has had on ourselves), seems to possess something of the superiority of sight over hearsay. When we read of events in their ordinary train, we pitch ourselves with difficulty into the scenes of action—sometimes wholly omit to do so; and there is a want of life and presence in them accordingly. When we are placed in the scenes themselves, and told to look about us—such and such a thing having happened in *that* house—*this* street being one in which another famous adventure took place, and *that* old mansion having been the dwelling of wit or beauty, we find ourselves comparatively at home, and enjoy the probability and the spectacle twice as much. We feel (especially if we are personally conversant with the spot) as if Shakspeare and Milton, Pope, Gay, and Arbuthnot, the club at the Mermaid, and the beauties at the court of White-Hall, were our next-door neighbours.

We shall take the reader, then, as speedily as possible among the quarters alluded to, and trouble him very little beforehand with dry abstracts and chronologies, or with races of men almost as uninteresting. The most patriotic reader of our history feels that he cares very little for his ancestors the Britons; of whom almost all he knows is, that

they painted their skins, and made war in chariots. Nor do the Romans in England interest us more. They are men in helmets and short skirts, who have left us no memorial but a road or two, and an iron name. That is all that we know of them, and we care accordingly. Perhaps the Saxons, after having destroyed the Roman architecture as much as possible, and repented of it, took their own from what had survived. The greatest relic of Cæsar's countrymen in the metropolis was the piece of wall which ran lately south of Moorfields, in a street still designated as London Wall. The Romans had a vast material genius, not so intellectual as that of the Greeks, nor so calculated to move the world ultimately, but highly fitted to prepare the way for better impressions, by showing what the hand could perform; and as they built their wall in their usual giant style of solidity, it remained a long while to testify their magnificence. Small relics of it are yet to be seen in Little Bridge Street, behind Ludgate Hill; on the north of Bull-and-Mouth Street, between that street and St. Botolph's Churchyard; and on the south side of the Churchyard of Cripplegate. There was another in the garden of Stationer's Hall, but it has been blocked up.

ANCIENT BRITISH LONDON was a mere space in the woods, open towards the river, and presenting circular cottages on the hill and slope, and a few boats on the water. As it increased, the cottages grew more numerous, and commerce increased the number of sails.

ROMAN LONDON was British London, interspersed with the better dwellings of the conquerors, and surrounded by a wall. It extended from Ludgate to the Tower, and from the river to the back of Cheapside.

SAXON LONDON was Roman London, despoiled, but retaining the wall, and ultimately growing civilized with Christianity, and richer in commerce. The first humble cathedral church then arose, where the present one now stands.

NORMAN LONDON was Saxon and Roman London, greatly improved, thickened with many houses, adorned with palaces of princes and princely bishops, sounding with minstrelsy, and glittering with the gorgeous pastimes of knighthood. This was its state through the Anglo-Norman and Plantagenet reigns. The friar then walked the streets in his cowl (Chaucer is said to have beaten one in Fleet Street), and the knights rode with trumpets in gaudy colours to their tournaments in Smithfield.

In the time of Edward the First, houses were still built of wood, and roofed with straw, sometimes even with reeds, which gave rise to numerous fires. The fires brought the brooks in request; and an importance which has since been swallowed up in the advancement of science, was then given to the *River of Wells* (Bagnigge, Sadler's, and Clerkenwell), to the *Old Bourne* (the origin of the name of Holborn,) to the little river Fleet, the Wall-brook, and the brook Langbourne, which last still gives its name to a ward. The conduits, which were large leaden cisterns, twenty in number, were under the special care of the lord mayor and aldermen, who, after visiting them on horseback on the eighteenth of September, "hunted a hare before dinner, and a fox *after* it, in the *Fields near St. Giles's*."[\[10\]](#) Hours, and after-dinner pursuits, must have altered marvellously since those days, and the *body* of aldermen with them.

It was not till the reign of Henry the Fifth, that the city was *lighted at night*. The illumination was with lanterns, slung over the street with wisps of rope or hay. Under Edward the Fourth we first hear of *brick houses*; and in Henry the Eighth's time of *pavement in the middle of the streets*. The general aspect of London then experienced a remarkable change, in consequence of the dissolution of religious houses; the city, from the great number of them, having hitherto had the appearance "of a monastic, rather than a commercial metropolis."[\[11\]](#) The monk then ceased to walk, and the gallant London apprentice became more riotous. London, however, was still in a wretched condition, compared with what it is now. The streets, which had been impassable from mud, were often rendered so with filth and offal; and its homeliest wants being neglected, and the houses almost meeting at top, with heavy signs lumbering and filling up the inferior spaces, the metropolis was subject to *plagues* as well as fires. Nor was the interior of the houses better regarded. The people seemed to cultivate the plague. "The floors," says Erasmus, "are commonly of clay, strewn with rushes, which are occasionally renewed; but underneath lies unmolested an ancient collection of beer, grease, fragments of fish, &c., &c., and everything that is nasty."[\[12\]](#) The modern Englishman piques himself on his cleanliness, but he should do it modestly, considering what his ancestors could do; and he should do it not half so much as he does, considering what he still leaves undone. It is the disgrace of the city of London in particular, that it still continues to be uncleanly, except in externals, and even to resist the efforts of the benevolent to purify it. But time and

circumstance ultimately force people to improve. It was plague and fire that first taught the Londoners to build their city better. We hope the authorities will reflect upon this; and not wait for cholera to complete the lesson.

Erasmus wrote in the time of Henry the Eighth, when the civil wars had terminated in a voluptuous security, and when the pride of the court and nobility was at its height. Knighthood was becoming rather a show than a substance; and the changes in religion, the dissolution of the monasteries, and above all, the permission to read the Bible, set men thinking, and identified history in future with the progress of the general mind. Opinion, accidentally set free by a tyrant, was never to be put down, though tyranny tried never so hard. Poetry revived in the person of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey; and, by a maturity natural to the first unsophisticated efforts of imagination, it came to its height in the next age with Shakspeare. The monasteries being dissolved, London was become entirely the commercial city it has remained ever since, though it still abounded with noblemen's mansions, and did so till a much later period. There were some in the time of Charles the Second. The manners of the citizens under Henry the Eighth were still rude and riotous, but cheerful; and manly exercises were much cultivated. Henry was so pleased with one of the city archers, that he mock-heroically created him Duke of Shoreditch; upon which there arose a whole suburb peerage of Marquisses of Hogsdon and Islington, Pancras, &c.

In Elizabeth's time the London houses were still mostly of wood. We see remains of them in the Strand and Fleet

Street, and in various parts of the city. They are like houses built of cards, one story projecting over the other; but unless there is something in the art of building, which may in future dispense with solidity, the modern houses will hardly be as lasting. People in the old ones could at least dance and make merry. Builders in former times did not spare their materials, nor introduce clauses in their leases against a jig. We fancy Elizabeth hearing of a builder who should introduce such a proviso against the health and merriment of her buxom subjects, and sending to him, with a good round oath, to take a little less care of his purse, and more of his own neck.

In this age, ever worthy of honour and gratitude, the illustrious Bacon set free the hands of knowledge, which Aristotle had chained up, and put into them the touchstone of experiment, the mighty mover of the ages to come. This was the great age, also, of English poetry and the drama. Former manners and opinions now began to be seen only on the stage; intellect silently gave a man a rank in society he never enjoyed before; and nobles and men of letters mixed together in clubs. People now also began to speculate on government, as well as religion; and the first evidences of that unsatisfied argumentative spirit appeared, which produced the downfall of the succeeding dynasty, and ultimately the Revolution, and all that we now enjoy.

The governments of Elizabeth and James, fearing that the greater the concourse the worse would be the consequences of sickness, and secretly apprehensive, no doubt, of the growth of large and intellectual bodies of men near their head-quarters, did all in their power to confine

the metropolis to its then limits, but in vain. Despotism itself, even in its mildest shape, cannot prevail against the spirit of an age; and Bacon was at that minute foreseeing the knowledge that was to quicken, increase, and elevate human intercourse, by means of the growth of commerce. Houses and streets grew then as they do now, not so quickly indeed, but equally to the astonishment of their inhabitants; and the latter had reason to congratulate themselves on a pavement to walk upon; a luxury for which a lively Parisian, not half a century ago, is said to have gone down on his knees, when he came into England, thanking God that there was a country "in which some regard was shown to foot passengers." In Charles the First's reign the suburbs of Westminster and Spitalfields were greatly enlarged, and the foundation of Covent Garden was commenced, as it now stands. Symptoms of a future neighbourhood appeared also in Leicester Fields, though the place continued to be what the name imports, as late as the beginning of the last century. The progress of building received a check from the Civil Wars, but only to revive with new spirit; and the great Fire—which was a great blessing—swallowed up at once both the deformity and the disease of old times, by widening the streets, and putting an end to the liability to pestilence. London has not had a "*plague*" since, unless it be indigestion; which, however, is the great disease of modern sedentary times, and will never be got rid of, till we grow mental enough to have more respect for our bodies.

Towards the end of the reign of Charles the Second the metropolis began to increase in the direction of Holborn; Hatton Garden, Brook, and Greville Streets were built; and

Ormond Street ran towards the fields. In this and the following reigns the mansion-houses of the nobility on the river side began to give way to the private houses and streets, still retaining the name of the Strand. Pall Mall and St. James's increased also; and Soho Square, on its first building, received the name of the Duke of Monmouth. But particulars of that nature will be better noticed in the body of our work. The nobility, gentry, and the wits, were now mixed up together. City taverns were still frequented by them; and city marriages began to be sought after, to mend the fortunes of the debauched cavaliers. Elizabeth's successor, James, was the first king who entered into anything like domestic familiarity with the monied men of the city. Charles the Second took "t'other bottle" with them (see the *Spectator*); and Lord Rochester played the buffoon on Tower Hill, as a quack doctor.

The streets about St. Martin's-in-the-fields and St. Giles's-in-the-fields, those of Clerkenwell, the neighbourhood of Old Street and Shoreditch, Marlborough Street, Soho, &c., successively arose in the time of Queen Anne, as well as a good portion of Holborn, beginning from Brook Street and including the neighbourhood of Bedford Street and Red Lion Square. St. Paul's, too, was completed as it now stands. This, and the succeeding times of the Hanover succession, were the times of Whig and Tory, of the principal wit-poets, of writers upon domestic manners, and of what may be called an ambition of good sense and reason,—"sense" being the favourite term in books, as "wit" had been in the age of Charles. Clubs were multiplied *ad infinitum* by the more harmless civil wars between Whig and Tory; and ale

and beer brought the middle classes together, as wine did the rich. *Mug-house* clubs abounded in Long Acre, Cheapside, &c.; "where gentlemen, lawyers, and tradesmen used to meet in a great room, seldom under a hundred," if we are to believe the *Journey through England*, in the year 1724.

At the commencement of the last century the village of St. Mary-le-bone was almost a mile distant from any part of London; the nearest street being Old Bond Street, which scarcely extended to the present Clifford Street. Soon after the accession of George the First, New Bond Street arose, with others in the immediate neighbourhood, and the houses in Berkeley Square and its vicinity. Hanover Square and Cavendish Square were open fields in the year 1716. They were built about the beginning of the reign of George the Second, at which time the houses arose on the north side of Oxford Street, which then first took the name. The neighbourhood of Cavendish Square, and Oxford Market, Holles Street, Margaret Street, Vere Street, &c., are of the same date; and the grounds for Harley, Wigmore, and Mortimer Streets were laid out; the village and church of Mary-le-bone being still separated from them all by fields. At the same period the legislature ordered the erection of the three parishes of St. George's Bloomsbury, St. Anne's Limehouse, and St. Paul's Deptford, London having, at that time, extended further in the last quarter than any other, by reason of the trade on the river.

So late, nevertheless, as this period, Fleet Ditch was a sluggish, foul stream, open as far as Holborn Bridge, and admitting small vessels for trade, coal barges, &c. It had

become such a nuisance, that it was now arched over, and the late Fleet Market soon appeared on the covering. About the year 1737, the west end of the town was improved by the addition of Grosvenor Square and its neighbourhood.

The increase of the metropolis on all sides was in proportion to the length of the reign of George the Third. The space between Mary-le-bone was filled in; Southwark became a mass of houses united with Westminster; and new towns rather than suburbs, appeared in all quarters; some with the names of towns, as Camden and Somers Town; to which have been added, since the death of that prince, Portland Town; a good half of Paddington, now joined with Kilburn; a world of new streets between Paddington and Notting Hill; Notting Hill itself including Shepherd's Bush; another new world of streets, called Belgravia, between Knightsbridge and Pimlico; others out by Peckham and Camberwell, including Clapham and Norwood; and others again on the east, reaching as far as the skirts of Epping Forest! Indeed, every village which was in the immediate and even the remote neighbourhood of London, and was quite distinct from one another at the beginning of the reign of George the Third, is now almost, if not quite, joined with it, including Highgate and Hampstead themselves on the north, Norwood on the south, Turnham Green and Parson's Green on the west, and Laytonstone on the east. The whole of this enormous mass of houses now presents us, more or less, in all quarters, with handsome streets, and even with squares; and the two sides of the river are united by a series of noble bridges. New churches also have risen in every direction; and though the architecture is none of the best,

they contribute to a general air of neatness and freshness, which the increase of education and politeness promises to keep up. There is an old prophecy that Hampstead is to be in the middle of London; a phenomenon that London would really seem inclined to bring about. But a metropolis must stop somewhere; and the very causes of its growth (we mean the facilities of carriage, &c.) will ultimately, perhaps sooner than is looked for, prevent it. Railways now allow numbers to reside at a distance, who a few years ago would have remained in London.

Ancient British London is conjectured to have been about a mile long, and half a mile wide. Modern London occupies an area of above eighteen square miles; and all this space, deducting not quite two miles for the river, is filled up with houses and public buildings, with a population of perhaps two million of souls, and with riches from all parts of the globe. In this respect London may justly be said to be the "metropolis of the world;" though Paris has the advance of it in some others.

During the reign of George the Third, the whole mind of Europe was shaken up more vehemently than ever by the French Revolution; and, as the consequence is after such tempestuous innovations, men began to look about them, to see what had stood the test of it, and how they might improve their condition still farther. After a great many disputes, natural on all sides, and a singular proof of the omnipotence of public opinion over the most extraordinary military power, it may be safely asserted, that the essence of that opinion, or the intellectual part of it is secretly acknowledged as the great regulator of society, even by