

LEEDS CASTLE.

ABOUT three miles from the village of Lenham, in the county of Kent, (England,) stands Leeds Castle. It is a turreted and magnificent stone structure, but having been erected at various periods, and under the direction of various tastes, it exhibits different styles of architecture. Its situation is delightful; standing in a well-wooded park plentifully supplied with deer, and commanding a prospect of the far-stretching fields and undulating hills which terminate the horizon. It is surrounded by a spacious moat, supplied with running water which rises at Lenham, and empties its current into the river Medway. This current abounds with fish, particularly the pike, which thrives here remarkably well, and is frequently taken weighing from thirty to forty pounds. At the principal entrance to this castellated pile are the remains of an ancient gateway, razed to within about one yard of the ground; these ruins, together with the grooves formed for the portcullis, which are still to be seen there, indicate its original strength and importance. At a short distance, in a northerly direction, are the vestiges of a very ancient structure, supposed, and with much probability, to be that portion of the castle where Robert de Crevequer established three chaplains when it was originally built.

The approach to the castle is by a bridge of two arches, after crossing which you pass under a second gateway, which, with the part already described, appears to have constituted a portion of the ancient fortress raised by the Crevequers, and suffered to survive the demolition under which the residue of the fabric was scattered to the ground. After passing the latter gate you arrive at a quadrangular court-yard of a very handsome appearance; to the right of which stands a building which the style of its architecture leads us to suppose it to be of the period of William of Wickham, and most probably part of the pile erected by that celebrated ecclesiastic. The portion at the further side of this quadrangle contains the principal, or state chambers, with the more recent addition of a handsome uniform front of rustic stone-work: the windows are arched in the Gothic style, and the parapet is embattled. Behind this edifice, over a bridge composed of arches, there is a large fabric, constituting the extremity of the castle; it is now, however, built upon and enclosed as a passage-way. It presents a very handsome pile of excellent workmanship, combining beauty and strength, and seems of the period of Henry the Eighth; in which case it was, most probably raised by Sir Henry Guildford, who acted in the capacity of constable of this fortress under that monarch, and beautified the castle at the direction and expense of the crown; from the strength and situation of the place we would here believe the ancient keep of the castle to have once stood.

Sir Thomas de Colepeper was Castellan of Leeds Castle, under the famous Lord Bladesmere in the time of Edward the Second; but, in the fifteenth year of that monarch's reign he was hanged to the chain of the drawbridge, for having refused admission to Isabel, queen of that monarch, when in the act of performing a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas a Becket at Canterbury. Upon that occasion Leeds Castle and its manor were forfeited to the crown, but, either by the royal indulgence or by family entail, were subsequently restored to the son of the unfortunate Sir Thomas. In this castle, Ivan of Navarre, second consort of Henry the Fourth, being accused of having conspired against the life of her son-in-law, was held captive under Henry the Fifth; and here also Archbishop Chicheley presided, during the process instituted against Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester, accused of sorcery and witchcraft.

Independent of the historical associations established by ancient records connected with this grand structure,

George the Third and his consort Queen Charlotte, after reviving the grand encampment at Cocksbeath, honoured Leeds Castle with their presence on the 3d of November 1799; and on the following day received the congratulations of the nobility, general officers, and leading personages of the county of Kent, with the mayor and corporation of the neighbouring town of Maidstone. This famous and picturesque residence is now in the possession of — Frickham Esqr., but the venerable line of the Colepepers seems to assert some dormant claim to this beautiful estate and castle, which is said to arise from a matrimonial union between a female of that family and the celebrated parliamentary general Fairfax, who, in her right, enjoyed the estate, which would have reverted to the male line of the Colepepers, had not the loss of the marriage settlement prevented it. The pleasure grounds attached to the castle are, as may be inferred from our accompanying plate, very extensive, but sufficient exertion is not given to the preservation of the pile; which would be the more desirable, as the immediate and distant scenery is luxuriant and picturesque in the extreme; and capable of such improvements as would render it one of the most enviable residences in Great Britain.

Original.

CORRILLA, IMPROVISATRICE.

THIS celebrated female was born in Italy; her peculiar talent developed itself at an early age: she had cultivated it by a close, and regular course of study, not confined to literature, but embracing every branch of human knowledge.

Her splendid success throughout Italy induced the Emperor, Francis the First, to solicit her to visit Vienna. She was there received with every mark of distinction, and returned to her country overwhelmed with honours and wealth, lavished upon her by the Emperor.

The Empress of Russia, Catherine the Second, who gave great encouragement to the arts and sciences of every description; and who wished every thing great to be attached to her court, proposed to Corrilla to visit St. Petersburg; but her dread of encountering the severity of such a climate, her own private attachments, and tastes, prevented her from accepting the flattering and magnificent offers made her by the Empress.

In 1776, Corrilla visited Rome, where the highest honours that can be bestowed upon poetic talent, awaited her. She was received by the Academy des Arcades under the name of Olympica: where having spoken upon a given number of subjects—after twelve examinations, appointed by the Academy—she was judged worthy of the laurel; before she was crowned, the Roman Senate declared her, *nobile cittadina*.* After this event, the first subject proposed for the display of her eloquence, was her thanks to the Senate; the second, a refutation of the doctrine that Christian humility has a tendency to destroy courage, and the enthusiasm necessary to the advancement of the fine arts. The next subject given her was, the superiority of modern philosophy over that professed by the ancients. She spoke on all these subjects with a facility, a perspicuity, a brilliancy of ideas, a warmth of imagination, that excited the utmost enthusiasm in her audience; but this wonderful success laid her open to the malignant attacks of jealousy and malevolence.

Corrilla published some of her small poems; but like most *impromptu* pieces, they do not enhance the reputation of their author.

* Noble citizen.