

MEMORABLE PLACES AND EVENTS.—MARCH.

THE BERNAL COLLECTION.

In March and April, 1854, was dispersed by auction the valuable collection made by the late Mr. R. Bernal of articles of rare excellence, and of an age extremely rich in ornamental art, extending from the Byzantine period to that of Louis Seize. The high prices which the several articles brought are to be attributed rather to their artistic character than to their extrinsic value as historic relics. They consisted of Oriental, German, Dresden, Sevres, Capo di Monte, and Chelsea china; Portraits remarkable for their costumes; Miniatures; Medieval Metal-work, and Ecclesiastical Silver; Limoges, Dresden, and Oriental Enamels; Carvings in Ivory; Faenza and Palissy Ware; Armour, Arms, and Stained Glass; Venetian and German Glass; Watches, Clocks, and Compasses, &c. We have engraved a group of *Sevres Gros Bleu Vases*, for which Prince Demidoff is said to have once offered Mr. Bernal 3000 guineas. The two front vases are in pairs, the taller vase behind forming the centre. The taller is eighteen inches high; the handles and body are festooned with raised and gilt leaves; the centre is exquisitely painted with a peasant and two girls gathering cherries; and on the reverse with a bacchanal subject and flowers. From the *Carvings in Ivory* we have selected a Powder-flask, carved in high relief with figures hunting wild animals. From the *Clocks* we have chosen a very elegant specimen—a clock in elegant case of metal-gilt, in the form of a temple; it is elaborately chased and engraved with figures and arabesques, and is surmounted by a figure standing upon a globe; at the upper and lower angles are winged horses, and there is a dial on each side. The entire sale realised £62,680 6s. 5d.

Several of the articles brought extraordinary prices: among the most costly items were—a Sevres Cabinet, £465; a pair of Dresden Candelabra, £231; a pair of Vases, painted à la Watteau, 95 guineas; King Lothaire's Magic

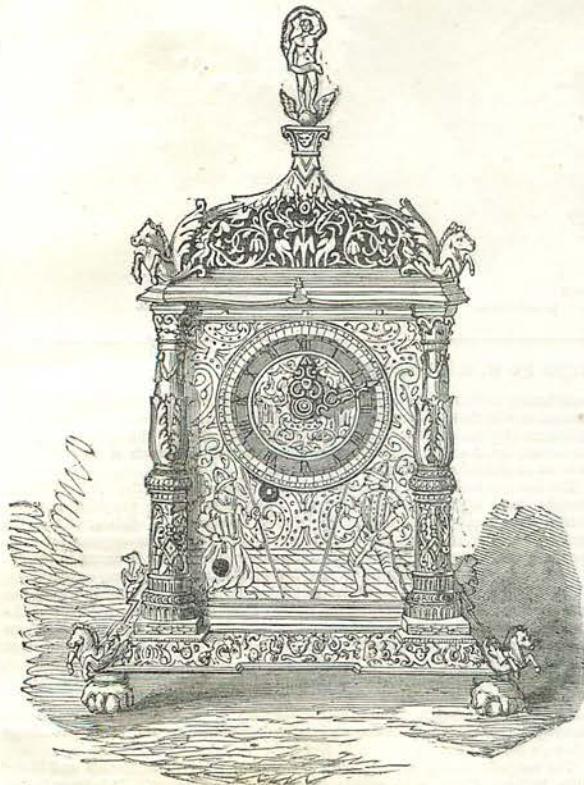
Crystal, bought by Mr. Bernal for 10 guineas, and once sold in Paris for 12*l.*, brought 225 guineas; Sir Thomas More's Candlesticks, bought by Mr. Bernal for 12 guineas, were sold for 220 guineas; the celebrated Reliquaire of the King's, 63 guineas; a Metal-gilt Moresque Dish, £57 15*s.*; a curious Steel Lock for a Shrine, £32; St. Thomas à Becket's Reliquaire, 27½ guineas; a Limoges Enamel Portrait of Catherine di Medicis, 400 guineas; a Faenza Plate, bought at Stowe for £4, brought £120; a circular Bernard Palissy Dish, £162; among the armour, Steel Gauntlets, 50 guineas a pair; a Warder's Horn, £56; and a Spanish Breast-plate of russet steel, £155. The first three days of the porcelain produced upwards of £6000; and about 400 lots of Majolica Ware, which cost Mr. Bernal 1000 guineas, in this sale realised upwards of £7000, a proof of the skill of Mr. Bernal as a collector; and showing that the purchase of articles of *vertu*, guided by correct taste and judgment, may prove a very profitable means of investment.

Rarely has the dispersion of any assemblage of any Works of Art realised such high prices as the first portion of Mr. Bernal's Collection. In neither of the sales of Mr. Beckford at Fonthill or Bath, at the Strawberry-hill sale (in 1842), or at that of Stowe (in 1848), were there assembled so many choice articles as in the Bernal Collection. Fonthill, Strawberry-hill, and Stowe included many treasures of historic repute, more valuable for having been possessed by celebrated personages than for their perfection as works of art. Mr. Bernal's Collection, however, presented higher claims; inasmuch as his judgment was acknowledged over Europe; and the page which M.

Planché prefixed to the Catalogue attests, with graceful truth, the value of these Art treasures. "Distinguished among English antiquaries by the perfection of his taste, as well as the extent of his knowledge, the difficulty of imposing upon him was increased by the necessity of the fabrication being fine enough in form, colour, and workmanship to rival the masterpiece it simulated—to be, in fact, itself a gem of art, which it would not pay to produce as a relic of antiquity. Mr. Bernal could be tempted by nothing that was inferior."



CURIOSLY CARVED IVORY POWDER-FLASK, FROM THE BERNAL COLLECTION.



CURIOS GILT CLOCK, FROM THE BERNAL COLLECTION!



BEAUTIFUL GROUP OF SEVRES VASES, FROM THE BERNAL COLLECTION