VIEW OF WEYMOUTH, DORSET.

The success which attended these efforts of the necromancer, spread his reputation all over Paris, and when it was announced that he would exhibit his mysterious art in the old Convent of the Capuchins, the public excitement amounted to frenzy. Large prices were asked for seats, and those who could obtain them at any price were regarded as fortunate. All the accessories of the mysteries of the black art were added to the attraction of the performer. In the old chapel, surrounded by the monuments and graves of the dead—with funeral emblems, sombre draperies, sepulchral lamps, hieroglyphic characters, and emblematic pictures—the wizard pretended to raise up ghosts "per order;" widows supposed they saw their husbands, orphans their parents, bereaved parents their children. Sometimes the figures approached close to the spectators, sometimes retired to a distance, sometimes smiled, and at others wore an expression of calm resignation; sometimes the apparitions were heralded by thunder claps, sometimes they were accompanied by soft music, and they invariably came through a black curtain at the further end of the hall. The excitement became intense, and the greater the excitement the better things became for the pocket and popularity of the wizard. But France had sterner work to do than that of necromancy, and was fast making more ghosts than she raised, so the delusion vanished, and people saw both sides of the wizard's curtain, and found that a superior description of magic lantern had enlisted their credulity, and led them to mistake painted shadows for beings of another world. The means adopted by Robertson to carry out his deception, we shall explain in a future number.

WEYMOUTH.

A VISIT to the seaside is what we all enjoy, and all of us occasionally require. As, doubtless, thousands of our readers will shortly be visiting the coast, an account of some of the most popular watering-places will be acceptable. A series of such pen and pencil sketches we propose introducing—not, however, confining ourselves to the order in rank and importance of the localities described. We begin with Weymouth.

Royalty and railways have made travelling fashionable and easy, and we are not now the stay-at-home race which forty or sixty years ago we were commonly said to be. William IV. was not much of a traveller after he quitted the naval service. George IV., with the exception of State progresses late in life, contented himself with an occasional sojourn at that architectural monstrosity, the Brighton Pavilion; and George III. was satisfied with a stay at Windsor, or a trip to Weymouth, as a relief to the monotony of London and Kew. Very different is it with Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, and very widely extended is the range of the "Court Circular;" now up in the Highlands, among the grandeur of mountain scenery; now in the Isle of Wight, with its magnificently rocky coast; now amidst all the festivities of Continental capitals; now home again to London or to Windsor's royal pile. The Queen is a great traveller, and the royal children worthily imitate and improve upon her example. The facilities for travelling are so much greater than they were, that due allowance must be made for those who, in days gone by, never stirred from their island home, and seldom travelled over it. The railway, with its convenient and commodious carriages, bears Her Majesty from one end of Great Britain to the other in a few hours; but it was not so when George III. was king. A heavily-built carriage, with no great elasticity in its springs, and but little comfort in its padded cushions, bore him over roads that were none of the best. Soldiers were needed, not only as a guard of honour, but for really useful service, for the roads were dangerous and highwaymen were daring. It was a long journey from London to Weymouth, for 120 miles was then a weary distance, and it is no matter of surprise that kings and their lieges shrunk from such travelling when they could help it. But railways have revolutionised us, and a trip to Weymouth is now very easily performed.

Weymouth is a fine old town, not half so fashionable and attractive in appearance as its younger neighbour, Melcombe Regis, but a curious and interesting place. Of course many of the houses are poor and dilapidated, of course the streets are irregularly laid out, of course in some quarters there is a pervading smell of fish; for once upon a time it was nothing but a fishing town, and it still retains much of its original character. But what can be finer than its sands, stretching out for many a mile, and commanding a noble prospect? What can be finer than the raised esplanade and terrace, which encircle a large portion of the bay, and furnish a splendid promenade for residents and visitors? And what can be finer than the bathing, which the purity and depth of water affords? Facing the sea George III. had his royal lodge built for himself and family, and he could not have chosen a more eligible site. He found Weymouth a fishing place of but small importance, but he made it a favourite resort of visitors, and the grateful town has loyally erected a statue to his memory at the northern end of the main street.

Melcombe Regis, which lies on the opposite side of Weymouth harbour, and which is connected with it by a handsome stone bridge, consists chiefly of large handsome houses, extending for about a mile in front of the esplanade. It has a park—recently formed—of about twenty acres, which will, in course of time, add considerably to the attractions of the place.

Weymouth and Melcombe are, as we have before stated, divided by the inlet of the sea; the inlet is narrow, and there is at low water but six feet water over the bar; this renders the harbour inaccessible to large vessels. The Portland Roads, however, little more than a mile distant from the town, afford anchorage for ships of any dimensions; and the inconvenience which was formerly experienced by vessels anchoring in these roads, on account of their exposed position to the east and south-east winds, has been overcome by the erection of those triumphs of art, the Portland Breakwaters.

The erection of these two breakwaters, the largest of which is 6,000 feet in length, was commenced in 1849; the plan was proposed by the postmaster of Weymouth, Mr. John Harvey; and the foundation-stone of the stupendous work was laid by the Prince Consort. The material for the construction is supplied from the Portland quar-

ries—a large number of convicts being employed in the work.

During the summer months Weymouth is frequented by a large number of visitors—its fine position, suitability for bathing, and the other attractions of a watering-place, rendering it a favourite locality with all who seek fresh air, pure water, and good sea-views. Ship-building is carried on to a limited extent; and the chief exports are Portland stone, Roman cement, &c.; but the construction of the breakwaters has done much to increase the importance of the town, forming, as they do, one of the most stupendous harbours of the country.

Three fairs are held at Weymouth in the course of the year, and races and regattas annually take place.

JOHN WALTON'S FARM.

"HADN'T you better subscribe for it?"

"I tell you, no. I haint got the money to spare; and, if I had, I haint got the time to waste over newspapers," said Eben Sawyer, with some emphasis.

"But you will gain much information from it in the course of a year, sir," pursued John Walton.

"I tell you, I don't want it!"

"Well, what do you say, Mr. Grummet? Shan't I have your name?"

"No, sir!" This was spoken so flatly and bluntly, that Walton said no more; but folded up the prospectus of a periodical which he had with him, and then turned away.

Eben Sawyer and Ben Grummet were two old farmers—that is, old at the business, though they had only reached the middle age of life; and after their young neighbour had gone, they expressed their opinion concerning him.

"He'll never make a farmer!" said Sawyer, with a shake of the head. "He spends too much time over them papers and books of his'n. He's a leetle mite above farmin', in my opinion."

"Them's my sentiments," responded Grummet. "I tell you, Eben, the man that thinks to make a livin' on a farm in this country, has got to WORK for it."

At this juncture, Sam Bancroft came past. He was another old native of the district.

"We was just talkin' about young Walton," said Sawyer.

"I've just come from there," replied Sam.

"He's been borin' me to sign for a paper; but he couldn't come it!"

"Ha, ha!—so he bored us. He's gettin' a leetle too high for a farmer."

"He's rippin' his barnfloor up!" said Bancroft.

"Rippin' the floor up!" repeated Grummet. "Why, Mr. Amsden had the whole floor put down new only three years ago."

"The stable floor, I mean," pursued Bancroft. "He's got a carpenter up from the village; and his two hired men are helpin'."

"Whew! I opine he'll make a farmer!"

And so they all opined—with a reservation. In short, there was something highly ridiculous in the thought of a man's thinking to be a farmer and a student at the same time; and all sorts of jests were discharged over it.

John Walton was a young man—some five-and-twenty; and though he had been born in the neighbourhood, yet much of his life had been spent in other portions of the country. His parents both died when he was quite young, and his father's farm passed into the hands of a Mr. Amsden. But now John had married, and he meant to be a farmer; and his thoughts naturally turned to the old homestead. He found Amsden willing to sell, and he bought—paying five hundred pounds down, and giving a note and mortgage for five hundred, which had been cashed by Mr. Piddon.

This farming district was upon a broad ridge of land, which had been cleared for a great many years; and though they were the handsomest and smoothest-looking farms in the parish, yet they were by no means the best. The summit of the ridge was crowned by a ledge of granite, and the soil, over the whole broad swell, was more or less wet and cold. This was particularly the case with John Walton's farm, some portions of it being wholly unfit for cultivation. There was one field of over twenty acres which was never fit for ploughing. The soil was so wet and heavy that it had never been worked to any advantage; yet there was some good land upon it, and Mr. Amsden had gained fair crops while he lived there.

Ben Grummet had a curiosity to see what was going on in Walton's barn, so he dropped in there. He found that the whole of the floor, where the cattle stood, had been torn up, and that they were digging a wide, deep trench the whole length of the tie-up.

"What is all this for?" asked Ben.

"Why," returned Walton, who was busy in superintending the work, and also in working himself, "I am having a place fixed here for making manure. I mean to fill this trench up with good muck, and thus save the liquids which have heretofore been lost. I think, by proper management, I can get full double the quantity of manure which others have got on this place."

"Do ye?" said Grummet, sarcastically.

"Yes," resumed the young man. "It is a fact that the liquid manures, could they be saved, would fully equal the solids, both in bulk and value; and when combined with well rotted muck, and some other articles which shall take up and retain all the more volatile parts, I feel sure that they will afford more fertilising powers and properties than the solid manures can."

"You don't say so! Where d'ye larn all that?"

"Partly from reading, and partly from observation," answered John, smiling at his good neighbour's open sarcasm.

"I don't s'pose it costs anything to do all this?"

"Oh, yes, it will cost me considerable before I get through."

"Yes: I should think 'twould!"

"I say!" he cried, as he met Sawyer shortly afterwards. "John Walton's about as nigh bein' crazy as a man can be!"

"Eh?—crazy, Ben?"

"Oh, he's got his head full of all sorts of nonsense. He's got his stable floor all torn away, and a trench dug there big enough to hold more'n twenty cart-loads of dirt."

"But what in nature's he goin' to do?"

"Why, he's goin' to save the liquids, as he calls 'em! And he's goin' to put in somethin' to take up the—the—*vol—voluntary* parts."

"*Voluntary* parts? What's them, Ben?"

"It was *vol* somethin'. But I don't know. I wouldn't ask him. I s'pose he just used the outlandish word so's to get me to ask him what it meant—an' then he'd show off his larnin'. But I wa'n't so green."

"I wonder if he thinks he's a comin' here to larn us old farmers how to work?" said Sawyer, rather indignantly.

"He thinks so," returned Grummet.

"Then he'll find out his mistake," added the other. "You mark my words, Ben. He'll be flat on his back afore two years is out!"

And these were not the only ones who looked for the same thing. The idea of a man's coming in there with any such new-fangled notions was absurd.

Autumn came, and after John Walton had mowed over his twenty-acre field—some of his coldest and stiffest land—getting hardly hay enough to pay for the labour, he set men at work digging deep trenches all over it. He had two dug lengthwise, running up and down the slope; and then he dug quite a number running across these. They were quite deep and broad, and into them he tumbled nearly all the stones that could be found in the fields.

"A pooty expensive way of gettin' rid o' rocks," remarked Grummet.

"It's a better place for them than on the surface, isn't it?" returned Walton, with a smile.

"Perhaps. But what on earth are ye doin' it for?"

"Why, I'm going to see if under-draining won't improve the land."

"*Under-draining!* What's that?"

"It is simply drawing off the water from the surface. This land is cold and wet; but if I can get the water to drain off among these rocks, the sun may warm the surface, and give me a good piece of soil here."

But it looked very foolish to Ben Grummet. He believed that "what was the natur of the soil couldn't be altered."

"That's a cur'us contrivance," said Sam Bancroft. He and Ben Grummet had been at work for Walton at hauling muck. He alluded to a large vat at the back of the house, into which ran a spout from the sink. This vat was capable of holding several cart-loads of stuff, and was already half full.

"That's a compost vat," explained Walton, who had overheard the remark. "All the slops from the house—the soap-suds, and such stuff—which most people waste, I save by this means, and turn to good account; and instead of throwing away refuse matter, I put it in here, and let it rot and ferment, and make manure."

"But what's this charcoal dust for?"

"It answers two purposes, though by only one office. It takes up the ammonia and other volatile matter, thus holding them for fertilising agents, and at the same time prevents the disagreeable effluvia which would otherwise arise from such a fermenting mass."

"That all sounds very well," remarked Ben, after Walton had left them; "but, let me tell you, *it don't pay!* He'd better let such fandangles alone if he ever expects to make a livin' at farmin'."

Before the ground froze up, Walton threw out most of the muck behind his stable, which had become well saturated, and filled the trench up anew.

The old farmers had a great many apple-trees, and made a great deal of cider; but the fruit was of an inferior quality. When spring came, Walton went to some of his neighbours, and asked them to go in with him, and send for some good scions to engraft upon their apple-trees. He explained to them just the plan he had formed for his own orchard. He had engaged a competent man to come and do the work of grafting, and, while they were about it, it would be cheaper to get grafts enough for the whole neighbourhood.

It was of no use. The old orchards were just such as their fathers had, and they were good enough. So Walton went at it alone. He had his trees all pruned and dressed, and nearly all of them grafted to such fruit as he thought would thrive best and sell best.

A little while later, and Ben Grummet had occasion to open his eyes. He found that John Walton had contrived to have a hundred and forty full loads of manure, all of which had been made within the year. However, he finally shook his head, and said, "Wait. We'll see if it's good for anything."

A little while later, and the grass began to spring up on the twenty-acre lot as it had never sprung up before. The two acres, which had been ploughed, and harrowed up light and fine, bore the best crop of corn that was grown in the whole county, and all the manure put upon it was some which had been manufactured.

And so the time went on, and John Walton was continually studying how to improve his farm. At the expiration of a few years the new scions had grown large and strong in his orchard, and began to bear fruit. He had taken care of his trees, and they were about ready to return him interest for the labour.

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Eben Sawyer, as Ben Grummet and Sam Bancroft came into his house one cool autumn evening, and the three filled their mugs with new cider; "have you heard about John Walton's apples?"

"I knew there was a man up to look at 'em," returned Ben; "but I aint heard no more."

"Well, I was there, and heerd the whole on't—so I know—I never would 'ave thought it. An orchard turn out like that!"

"But how much was it?"

"Why, Walton was offered—cash right down—a hundred pounds for the apples he's got on hand; and he tells me that he sent nearly fifty pounds' worth of early fruit off a month or more ago."

It was wonderful—more than wonderful! But they had to believe it.

"And look at that twenty-acre field," said Bancroft. "Ten years ago it wouldn't hardly pay for mowin'; now look at it. Think o' the corn and wheat he's gained there; and this year he cut more'n forty tons of good hay from it!"

"But that aint half," interposed Sawyer. "Look at the stock he keeps; and see what prices he gets for his cows and oxen. Why, he tells me he's cleared over four hundred pounds this year on his stock."

At this moment Mr. Walton came in. He had grown older, and was somewhat stouter than when he first became a farmer, and his neighbours had ceased to question his capacity, and had come to honour and respect him.

"We was talkin' about you, Mr. Walton," said Sawyer.

"Ah!" returned John, as he took a seat by the fire. "I hope you found nothing bad to say of me."

"Not a bit of it. We was talkin' about the wonderful improvements you've made on the old place, and of the money you make."

"And do you think it wonderful?"

"But aint it?"

"Well," replied Walton, "I don't know about that; but I'll tell you what I do know. I know there is no class of people in the world who may study the arts and sciences to better advantage than farmers; and yet, I am sorry to say, there is no class, as a class, occupying the same social position