

BEAUMONT LODGE,

THE SEAT OF VISCOUNT ASHBROOK.

OLD Windsor may be appropriately termed a village of villas, whose contrasted forms and situation, with the ancient elms that shade the banks of the majestic Thames, render it a polished scene of rural beauty. In former times, it was the seat of several Saxon kings, and in the reign of William the First was recorded to have possessed a hundred houses; but when that monarch fixed his residence on the neighbouring hill, it sank gradually into decay, and New Windsor arose under the guardianship and protection of the fortress he erected.

In this place, Beaumont Lodge is a distinguished object. The original mansion was built by Henry Frederick Thynne, afterwards Lord Weymouth, in the beginning of the last century, who made it his constant place of residence. This nobleman was an ancestor of the present Marquis of Bath, and died in the year 1705, since which period it has frequently changed its owners.

The Duchess of Kent was the next occupant of this beautifully situated seat; of whom, in the year 1750, it was purchased by the Duke of Roxburgh, for his son the Marquis of Beaumont. From this young nobleman it would seem to have acquired its present name; but in Rocque's map it is called Bowman Lodge; and in former times a family of that name was seated in the parish of Old Windsor,—to whom, probably, the ground on which the mansion was erected belonged. But as this is a question which, if not untimely entered upon, may be productive of much interesting speculation to the future enquirer, we forbear to open up the mine of antiquarian lore which, some century or two hence, may, perhaps, ripen. "We hope it may be gold another day." At present it is but the dross of idle and unimportant conjecture.

Beaumont Lodge was afterwards the residence of the Duke of Cumberland, and the grandfather of the present Earl of Mulgrave was also for a short time an inhabitant of it.

It was here, likewise, that the celebrated Warren Hastings resided, against whom Burke fulminated his eloquent but futile invectives; and in the attractions of this charming spot the Ex-Governor General of Bengal doubtless felt that nature supplied him with some compensation for the bitter

and personal malignity of the great orator. He, however, disposed of it at length to Henry Griffiths, Esq., a gentleman of considerable architectural taste, who pulled down the old building, with the exception of the west wing, and erected the present mansion, which lays claim to the distinction of being the first to display a new order of architecture, invented by Mr. Henry Emlyn, an architect of Windsor, and somewhat presumptuously styled—whether by the inventor himself, or by his injudicious admirers, we cannot say—the *British Order*.

This order is intended to celebrate, and is embellished with ornaments suggested by, the insignia of the Most Noble Order of the Garter. The corridor is composed of columns thirty-six feet eight inches in height, which are made to resemble twin-trees;—in the cleft, between the stems, instead of the protruding bark, the shield of a knight is introduced, which, together with the base, is made of Portland stone. The capitals are of Coade's artificial composition, and are so formed as to resemble the plumage of a cap worn by the Knights of the Garter. Ionic volutes are interwoven in the front, with the star peculiar to the order between them. The gorge and collar are disposed in the metopes, and in the continued frieze other symbolical ornaments, such as naval and military trophies, constitute the chief embellishments of this invention of Mr. Emlyn, here first introduced.

Although, looking at it as a whole,—but more particularly as a building of itself—intended rather as an architectural experiment than as a specimen putting forth distinct claims to rivalry with the great productions of the ancients: although, viewing it in the former light, we might be disposed to admit at least that Mr. Emlyn's invention had novelty of composition to recommend it; yet let us not be forbidden to express a hope that it will never be put forth as a criterion of our national taste, or an evidence of our architectural genius. Indeed, we shall not, perhaps, be far wrong if we designate the notion—we cannot call it an idea—of founding a "British Order" of architecture upon the artificial insignia and decorations of an order of chivalry, as not only unpoetical, but absurd.

In our unbounded admiration of the architecture of Greece, and of the productions of what are sometimes in the dimness of modern enlightenment called "the dark ages,"—we must consider any attempt to introduce, with a view to its adoption, an absolute new order into our own country, as attended with almost hopeless difficulties; and we must freely confess that there are very few in our own day from whom we could reasonably expect any achievement that should cause us willingly to dispense with the numerous varieties of the classic and Gothic styles, in which we cannot but think all the resources of the architect have been exhausted.

But the situation of Beaumont Lodge will always render it a delightful residence. It stands on a rising ground—contiguous to the castle of Windsor, with its park and forest,—and at a short distance from the river, which here spreads at once into a large pool, and then resumes its former channel.

We are here irresistibly reminded of Drayton's lines in his neglected poem—the *Polyolbion*—in which he describes the winding of the river just before it reaches this beautiful spot. We can imagine the fascinated stream recalling his scattered spirits precisely as he makes this point,—and calling himself together, as it were, to be deliberating whether he had not better make up his mind to go to London in a respectable and sober manner. The reader shall judge whether we have not probability on our side in behalf of our conjectural imagining. Here is the passage.—

"Set out with all this pomp when this imperial stream,
Himself established sees amid his watery realm,
His much-loved Henley leaves, and proudly doth
pursue

His wood-nymph Windsor's seat, her lovely site to
view.

Whose most delightful face, when as the river sees,
Which shews herself attired in tall and stately trees,
He in such earnest love with amorous gestures woos,
That looking still at her, his way was like to lose,
And wandering in and out so wildly seems to go,
As headlong he himself into her lap would throw."

The pleasure-grounds appertaining to

Beaumont Lodge consist of upwards of one hundred acres, rising in an easy ascent from the banks of the river to the summit of the hill behind—an ornamented upland, comprehending a walk of nearly two miles, leading to a winding and wavy terrace—to which is presented a prospect of exceeding variety, beauty, and interest. The principal feature consists of the stately towers of Windsor castle, with a fine range of wood stretching on to the forest. St. Leonard's Hill, the seat of the Earl of Harcourt, is also seen.

In the foreground, the windings of the majestic river Thames, and the rich vale through which it flows,—and in the distance the most lofty edifices of the great metropolis, may be discerned.

The family of the present noble proprietor, Lord Ashbrook, were formerly seated in Rutlandshire. In the tenth year of Richard II., William Flore, of Oakham, Esquire, was sheriff of that county. In the reign of Elizabeth, however, George Flower sold his estate at that place, and, embracing a military life, became an active and distinguished officer against the rebels in Ireland,—and by that queen was knighted, and constituted governor and constable of the fort of Waterford, in the year 1627. William Flower, his direct descendant, of Durrow, in the county of Kilkenny, was raised to the peerage in 1733, under the title of Baron of Castle Durrow. This nobleman died in 1746, and his son Henry, in September 1751, was advanced to the title of Viscount Ashbrook.

The present nobleman is the fourth viscount, and succeeded his brother William in 1802. His lordship is said to possess considerable taste, having formed a cabinet of medals at a great expense, and been at much pains to collect from time to time, various articles of vertu. In early life, he held a commission in the army, and served with honour under Sir Ralph Abercromby in Egypt.

LINES,

BY THE PRINCESS OLIVE OF CUMBERLAND.

At eve the Lily's head appears
Oppressed with Nature's dewy tears;
Weeping throughout the live-long night,
Until the sun's returning light
Chases those pearly drops away,
Which fall submissive to the day.
Even thus, while others calm repose,

And locked by sleep their eyelids close,
I count the lingering hours in vain,
Oppressed with grief—inured to pain:
Fast rain the tear-drops from mine eyes,
While echo pale repeats my sighs;
And oh! less happy than that flower,
No sunbeam cheers *my* waking hour.