

country-seat about 426 years ago, which ever since has worn a venerable aspect, in honour of the dignity of the immortal Founder. After this King died (and this King in person defeated the Scots, French, and Spaniards, both by land and sea repeatedly) it fell, and was converted into a priory for the amusement and refreshment of the Nuns of *Sion House*, now inhabited by the *Earl of Northumberland*; from whence, we have been told, is a subterraneous passage under the Thames, contrived for the more easy communication of the Nuns and Priors; and that this passage has been gone through within these few years, but that now the damp is so great, that no light will keep in to direct the passenger.—The Nuns of *St. Bridget*, in Portugal, talk highly of their House of *Sion*; nor do they think otherways, but that one day or other the Virgin Mary will restore her faithful daughters to their original inheritance. For when the persecution of the Papists arose in England, they were obliged to abandon this their ancient birth-right, and from thence they emigrated to Lisbon, where their Order still maintain their dignity, and profess their faith. At present, there are many English Ladies in that nunnery at Lisbon, whom I could wish a better fate, if we have a right to judge for others, and if we dare say that youth and beauty would be happier without, than within the walls of a cloister: for although these holy sisters declare a perfect reconciliation to this religious sedentary life, yet human nature will rebel in spite of those penances inflicted on the flesh, and deeply sigh at times for natural Love, and natural Liberty.

Such a change in the face of things is astonishing; and what one labours to build, another labours to destroy. The Palace of *Edward III.* at *Sheen*, is now wheeled out in barrows to form a bank for the river, and a path-way for the passengers—*Sic transit gloria mundi*—and we are to walk upon those walls, which defended the bravest and most illustrious Prince that ever England gave to rule a glorious and a noble people, from the inclemency of the air.

In the course of time, I should not be surprised to find these extensive gardens of *George III.* inclosed by act of Parliament, and rented to the people of *Richmond* for pasturage for their cattle, his Palace converted into a cow-house, and a plow drove through the labours of Mr. Brown.

Thus reflecting, I seated myself under a wide spreading beech tree opposite the westernmost ferry of *Isleworth*, and fell fast asleep. My dream turned upon the fluctuating change of human affairs; and I thought I was born possessed of a large estate in America—that I lived in a large house in Greenwich—and that the fineness of the day invited me to take an airing to Richmond (which name was again changed to *Sheen*, from the lucid brightness of the Thame's stream.) I was a man of study, and a great Antiquarian; and had made a voyage from North America, the seat of empire, to visit the ruins of London, and its environs.—Amongst other things, I sought for the noble and beautiful houses, described by the Poets, on the banks of the Thames; but alas! not a vestige of them was to be found. Cattle were feeding where Kings and Princes walked; and where the most superb houses stood, nettles and weeds overgrew the