



CHELSEA CHURCH.

The shadow of the famous dead begin to thicken around us with the bending trees—of great men, not as they mingled in the turmoil of court and council, but as they strolled in their gardens, laboured in the study, or went, like common people, through the daily round of domestic life. Within a very circumscribed space lay the abode of Pym, Shaftesbury, Locke, Addison, Steele, Swift, and Atterbury. The extinct hamlet of Little Chelsea was thus gilded by the greater lights of the Augustan age of British literature. Swift for a time had for his next neighbour over the way his intriguing brother of the cloth, and got on with him much more smoothly and pleasantly than was his wont with others. Had they agreed better they would doubtless have been worse friends.

Far back of this circle, in point of time, flourished on the same spot the author of *Utopia*, Sir Thomas Moore, handed down to us by that enigma among philosophers and divines, Erasmus, as every way a model man. Other accounts go to justify this character. To himself, his long and placid life must have appeared a perfect success, and he may well have deemed himself to be lapsing dreamily into the bliss of his imaginary republic until rudely awakened by the axe of the tyrant whom in the epitaph of his own composition in the heyday of his prosperity he styles the "best of princes." Readers of this inscription, which stands in faultless Latin on his monument in Chelsea church, may note, after the passage which proclaims the writer and deceased a stern foe to thieves and murderers, a blank space which was originally filled with "heretics," the identical class of malefactors for belonging to which he was himself, within three years, brought to the block by the best of princes. A keen helmsman it must have taken to steer in the wake of bluff Harry. The Vicar of Bray was right in claiming to be the only consistent man of his day.