

WASC 573

The Explosion at Waltham
abbey.

Transcribed from the
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22 April 1843.

and

Three photographed illustrations

THE EXPLOSION AT WALTHAM ABBEY

It was our painful task to announce in our last the dreadful catastrophe which occurred at the gunpowder manufactory at Waltham Abbey, on Thursday, the 13th instant, by which seven unfortunate individuals were prematurely hurried into eternity, and we this day lay before our readers a series of graphic sketches illustrative of the deplorable event, and its consequences, which may, perhaps, be interesting to our readers.

The gunpowder mills at Waltham Abbey stand at some distance out of the town, on the side of a broad running stream, which branches out of the river Lea, is the property of the Government, and is called Powder-mill river. Here a series of erections connected with the public service are found. They are built of wood, with slated roofs, and are termed Corning-houses, Press-houses, Washing-houses, and Glazing-mills. Four of these edifices, about 80 feet in length, and 29 or 30 feet in depth, have been destroyed - so completely demolished that nothing like the form of any one of them remains. Each is a black shapeless ruin. It is proper to state that they had been constructed on a plan which promised, in the event of an accident, to prevent the evil from extending beyond the place in which it originated. Between the corning-houses and the pressing and washing-houses, a strong brick buttress, 20 feet high, 15 feet thick, and 30 feet deep, had been built, which it was supposed would have proved an effectual barrier to the progress of fire. The hope, however, has proved vain. On Thursday seánight, the business being carried on in the usual way, about five minutes after three o'clock an explosion took place in the more northern corning-house. A few seconds afterwards the press-house and washing-house, separated from the corning-house by the buttress, also blew up. In a minute or two from that time the next corning-house, distant from the former about 200 yards, shared the same fate, and that in a few seconds was followed by a fourth explosion, and a second press-house and washing-house, separated, as in the other case, from the corning-house, were in an instant destroyed.

The corning-house No.2, in which the explosion originated, was situated in the midst of a group of poplars and willows - trees being generally planted near buildings of this kind in consequence of the resistance they afford to any communication with a distant object, should an accident arise. In this instance they have been proved altogether ineffectual - trunks two feet in diameter have been snatched asunder and thrown to a distance of several hundred feet, while those which still keep the erect position are entirely bereft of branches.

It would be well if the ruin of the buildings, and the destruction of the stores, were all; but, unfortunately, in the works which first blew up a number of unfortunate persons were employed, not one of whom survives. Seven men were in an instant dismissed from life; five of them were carried over the river to a very considerable distance, and fell lifeless fragments in the marshes. One corpse was recovered from the ruins, and one dead body was found out of the building, but on the same side of the river. It was difficult to recognise the deceased, they were so blackened, shattered, and disfigured. The names of the unfortunate men who have perished (sic) are as follow:- Thomas Sadd, Edward Essex, John Newland, John Dudley, James Luck, Samuel Brown, and James Cole. Mr. Sadd was the master-worker. On Thursday week he had been in the building but about ten minutes when the event occurred. The victims were all corning-housemen and persons of respectable character. Essex had worked on the establishment for more than half a century. Sadd's remains were soon identified by the blue coat which he wore, and by the loss of one tooth. He was said to have been carried not less than 130 yards from the corning-house, and to have but one foot when he reached the ground. At a considerable distance from the ruins the impression made by the fall of one of the sufferers remains very distinct. The marks of the head, the shoulder, hip, and the leg, were on Friday week most distinctly traced; and the indentation made by the body was in some parts nearly six inches deep.

Immediately after the accident many hundreds of persons repaired to the marshes. The bodies were collected, wrapped in sheets, and deposited in one of the buildings belonging to Government, at some distance from the ruins, there to await the orders which may be given for holding a coroner's inquest.

The alarm caused by this accident it is not easy to describe. A third and fourth building having been fired, from others that had exploded, distant from them 600 feet, it was not immediately clear that those which were still further off were safe. Not only were many windows in the town, and especially in the church, broken, but the effects of the shock were felt at a much greater distance. Almost incredible as it may appear, the report of the two explosions was distinctly audible in the metropolis. In Hyde-park, about ten minutes past three o'clock, they were heard and amidst the prevailing stillness appeared so loud that several persons imagined them to proceed from the guns fired in celebration of her Majesty's accouchement. A lamp and several squares of glass at the Waltham Abbey station of the North Eastern Railway were broken by the concussion, and its mischievous effects were felt at Waltham Cross. The windows of Trinity Chapel, the chapel of ease to Cheshunt parish, which stands by the side of the main road, suffered considerably. Five females who were collecting wood at a distance of more than a quarter of a mile from the mills were thrown down, and for a moment deprived of sight by the explosion, and the accompanying glare. The quantity of gunpowder in the works at the time is supposed to have exceeded 4000 lb., and the amount of property destroyed is estimated at nearly £12,000.

The interest felt with respect to this deplorable catastrophe, so far from having diminished on Saturday, was, if possible, greatly increased, not only in the immediate locality, but in the surrounding country. At 10 o'clock on the morning of that day Mr. Lewis, the coroner, attended on the spot, accompanied by a respectable jury, to inquire into the particulars of the shocking event. After the jury had been sworn, they adjourned to a place called the Barrel, situated near the scene of the sad catastrophe, to view the blackened and mutilated remains of the poor men whose lives had been lost by this melancholy occurrence. Some of the corpses had the limbs detached in the most frightful manner.

On the return of the jury a great number of witnesses were examined, touching the state of the machinery and the circumstances under which the unfortunate men killed were last seen alive.

Capt. George St. Vincent Whitmore, commanding the Royal Engineers, deposed to the fact that a formal report is made to his office monthly of the state of the machinery, and the report he received on the 3rd instant was perfectly satisfactory. He said that had there been less powder in the corning-house than there was it would have had no effect upon the explosion. It would have been just the same whether the quantity was 35 or 40 barrels. He wished particularly to state that persons making powder in Government establishments were never hurried. There was no necessity that they should be hurried. They were never called on to make a particular quantity of powder by a particular day. The cause of the accident was quite unknown to him. An electric shock would ignite gunpowder, and make it explode.

Several other witnesses having been examined to the same effect, the coroner briefly addressed the jury, who retired for a few minutes, and returned a verdict of "Accidental death," accompanied by an expression of their unanimous opinion that the manufactory appeared to be conducted by Captain Tulloch*, the inspector, with every possible precaution for the safety of the men employed under his superintendence.

The deceased were all married men. Mr. Sadd has left a widow and one child; John Newland, a widow and eight children, most of them, however, are grown up; Edward Essex, a widow, and two grown-up children; James Cole, a widow, and four children; James Luck, a widow and one child; John Budley (sic), a widow and one child; and Samuel Brown, a widow and two children.

The interment of the bodies, with the exception of that of Mr. Sadd, which was removed to a family burial ground at some distance, took place on Saturday afternoon, at five o'clock, in the parish churchyard. A great number of persons assembled to witness the solemn scene, and a feeling of deep sorrow for the fate of the unfortunate men evidently filled the minds of all present. The tragical occurrence has made an impression on the people of the village and neighbourhood which will not be effaced during life.

In the course of Saturday some bill stickers from an obscure London weekly print, which appears desirous of acquiring notoriety at any sacrifice, came into the town and put up placards, announcing a full report of what had occurred. The townspeople did not feel flattered by this mark of attention, and the bills were torn down. Their remark was, that all the particulars were already sufficiently known there, and those who were bereft of their friends did not wish to be further reminded of the calamity. The funerals were conducted in the most respectable manner - it was understood at the expense of the Government. Captain Tulloch* who has the chief direction of the works, has notified in the most feeling way to the widows and others who are sufferers from this mournful accident that every effort will be made to alleviate their affliction.

* This must have been Captain A.T. Tulloh. The inspector throughout 1843 was Lieut.-Col. C.T. Moody who was succeeded by Capt. Tulloh in 1845.

Three prints accompanying this account have been photographed.

vice versa; and the whole battery of her guns can be worked uniformly, and under the direction of the captain. In short, the view is not broken by paddle-boxes, and the deck, as it were, divided into two distinct parts. Another advantage is that the screw being under water is out of the way of mischief, and not liable to be damaged by shot; and a further advantage is, that she is capable of being turned about in a much smaller space than a steamer propelled by paddle-wheels, which, as every body knows, takes an immense space in the water to perform her evolutions. Neither, it may be added, does the screw propeller retard the sailing powers of the vessel, which paddle-boxes must unavoidably do, from the awkwardness of their position and their largeness of dimensions. The *Rattler* was laid down about twelve months ago; she is built of oak and constructed with great strength, which may be judged of from her deflexion or expansion upon the strain of launching being only half an inch. She does great credit to Mr. Atkins, the builder, who has shown his perfect professional knowledge in the building of this noble vessel. Her dimensions are as follow:—

	Feet.	In.
Length, extreme	195	0
Length on the deck	176	6
Length of the keel for tonnage	157	9½
Breadth, extreme	32	8½
Breadth, moulded	31	10
Depth in hold	18	7½
Burden in tons, 888	34	9½

The *Archimedes* steamer started from Blackwall at eight in the morning, with a number of gentlemen on board, members of the "Patent Ship-propeller Company," and the friends of the patentees, with the intention of being present at the launch. Owing, however, to a change in the time of launching, the *Archimedes* did not reach the scene of action until an hour after the *Rattler* was gracefully floating on the bosom of the Medway. The *Archimedes* was laid alongside of the new steam frigate however, and the company expressed themselves highly gratified with the fine mould and beautiful appearance of the new vessel. If the *Rattler* succeeds, as there is every reason to think she will, it is probable that no steamer will in future be built for Government with paddles. It is hardly possible but that the screw will come into universal operation; and that this may be speedily the case, we trust, not only for the sake of navigation, but for that of the talented and enterprising individual whose exertions have done so much for applying, in the best and most scientific manner, the power of steam as a means of navigation.

After the *Rattler* had been duly inspected and admired, the *Archimedes* started for town, and screwed up the river against a strong ebb tide in an admirable manner, completing the distance from Sheerness to Blackwall in five hours and twenty minutes, and arriving at the latter place shortly after eight o'clock.

We must not omit to mention that the commissariat department of the trip was very creditably managed by Mr. Pritchard, of the East India-road.



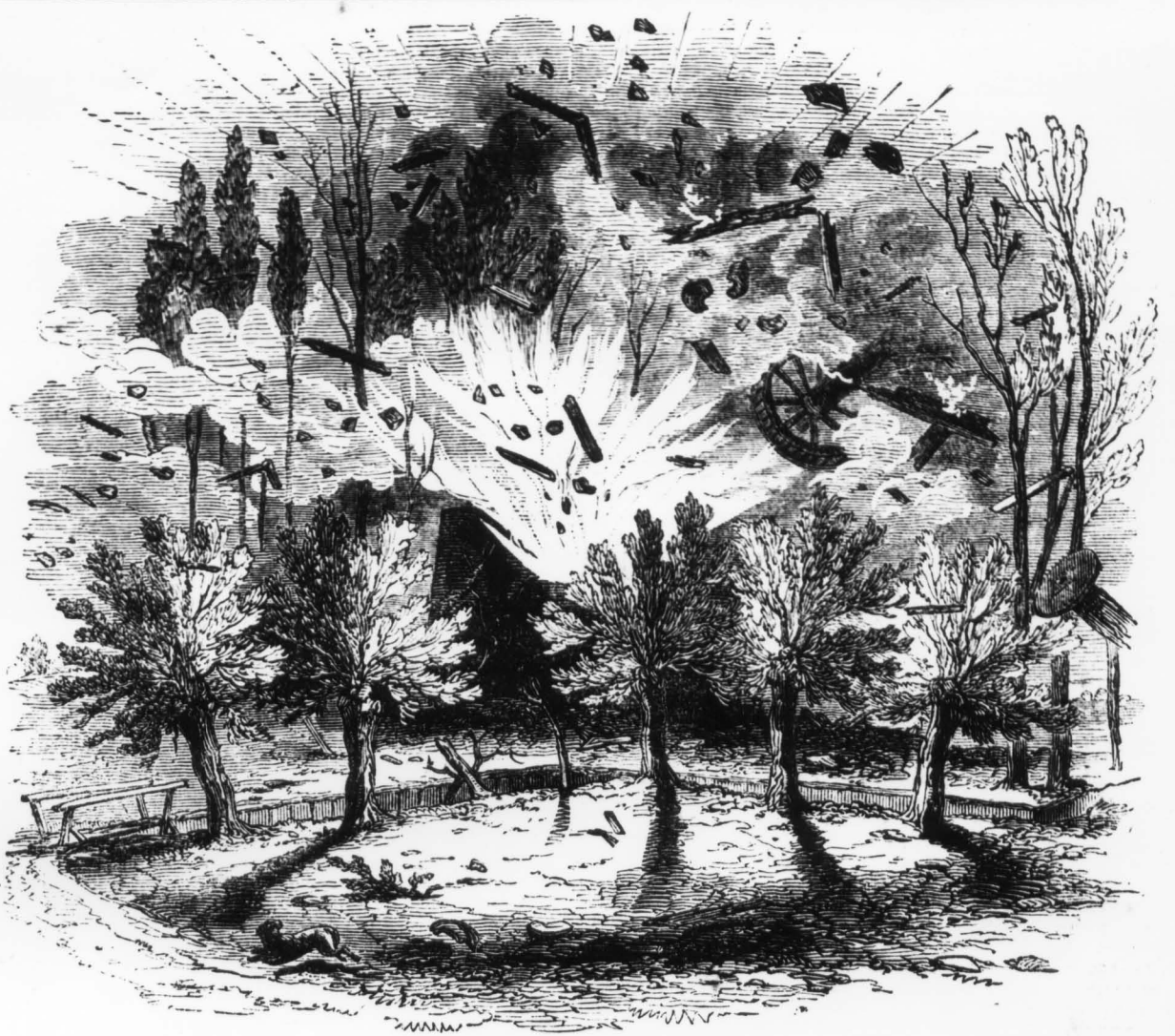
LABLACHE.

It is now upwards of a dozen years since the first welcome of the London public was bestowed on this most deserving favourite; and each season increasing, if there were any room for it, in public estimation, he has outgrown the very recollection of all his predecessors. It is hard properly to characterise the merit of Lablache; it is so Proteus-like that at one moment we would say, in the words written upon the Roman comedian, "*Pro jocus, quibus cunctus oblectabat*"—there never was such "a fellow of infinite humour;" and, in the next, we would esteem it as a "*grande munus*" if he would "reassume the weight and dignity of the tragic buskin." Lablache is essentially an actor, and of the greatest versatility; his singing powers, although extraordinary, are subservient, or rendered so, to the delicate discriminations of character which he is ever fond of making. His voice is uneven in its register; it is not a bass nor is it a baritone; it is stentorian in its middle and upper notes, and tells *quoad vocem* better in *buffa* music than in *seria*. It is his fine conception of acting that carries him through a tragic part, but in comedy he is revelling at his ease at home in the full luxuriance of his birthright—Neapolitan mirth. We have heard that Lablache was originally an orchestral performer—principal double-bass at San Carlo, and indebted to accident for the development of his dramatic genius. If so, what a discriminating old lady Dame Fortune often proves to be, blind as she is represented. To enumerate the characters, "from grave to gay," in which he is great would be only to publish the contents of the Italian stage's *repertoire*; nothing comes amiss to him; and, like Persiani, he is always ready to obligingly undertake a part as he is able to powerfully execute it. By-play forms the chief beauty of Lablache's acting. Who that ever saw him in *Leporello*, in the last scene, will not pronounce it inimitable? And again, the muttering his *pater noster* for his former wife, in "*Il Turco in Italia*," could any but a mind deeply imbued with reflecting fun ever dream of such racy imaginings? We have yet a treat in store—his *Don Pasquale*: may we hope that it will be speedily produced, that "laughter, holding both his sides," may enjoy the highest comic treat that was ever coupled with sweet music. Oh! that he could but speak English (he could if he liked), and that we might hear him say, in the words of *Sir John*—"My lord, this is a poor mad soul; and she says, up and down the town, that her eldest son is like you." What a *Falstaff* would there be in the person of Lablache, and what a mind to "fill it withal!"

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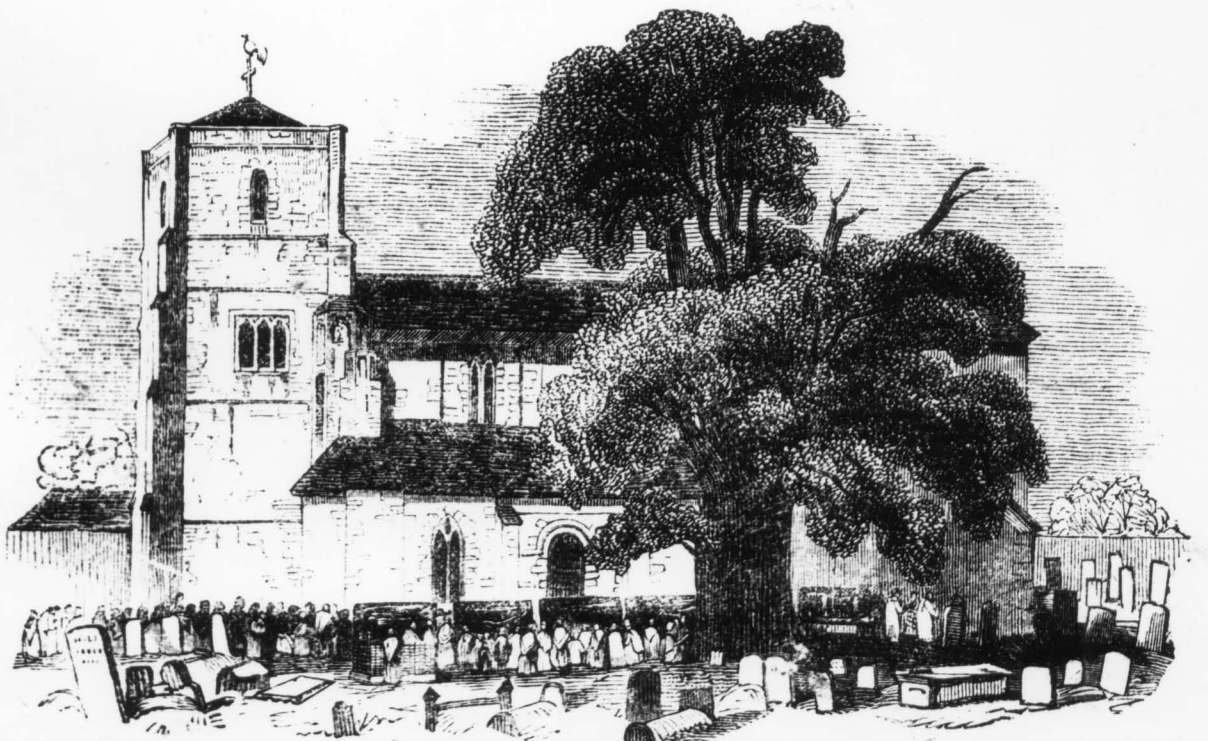
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FIRST EXPLOSION.



RUINS OF THE FOURTH MILL.



WALTHAM ABBEY—FUNERAL OF THE UNFORTUNATE WORKMEN.

to state that they had been constructed on a plan which promised, in the event of an accident, to prevent the evil from extending beyond the place in which it originated. Between the corner-houses and the pressing and washing-houses, a strong brick buttress, 20 feet high, and 15 feet thick, and 30 feet deep, had been built, which it was supposed would have proved an effectual barrier to the progress of fire. The hope, however, has proved vain. On Thursday evening, the business being carried on in the usual way, about five minutes after three o'clock an explosion took place in the more northern corner-house. A few seconds afterwards the press-house and washing-house, separated from the corner-house by the buttress, also blew up. In a minute or two from that time the next corner-house, distant from the former about 200 yards, shared the same fate, and that in a few seconds was followed by a fourth explosion, and a second press-house and washing-house, separated, as in the other case, from the corner-house, were in an instant destroyed.

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SOCIETY OF ARTS.—At a numerous special meeting held, last week, it was resolved, that, in consequence of improvement in the funds and prospects of the society, it should resume the grants of gold and silver medals, and that engrossed or ornamented letters be occasionally given, by way of honorary testimonials.

A correspondence has reached England between Mr. Cass, the well-known American Envoy in Paris, and Mr. Webster, the American Secretary of State. Mr. Cass complains bitterly of the "concessions" made to Great Britain, on the right of search question, by the terms of the late treaty, and demands his immediate recall. Mr. Webster, in reply, reproaches the refractory diplomatist in terms not the most gentle, denies that America has conceded the "right of visit," and declares that the pretensions and principles asserted by both powers, in reference to this matter, remain as before the treaty.

WHOLESALE LITERARY FORGERIES.—A recent trial at Rome has convicted Count Mariano of wholesale forgery of works which he had professed to discover and publish as Tasso's. Some small portion of these works which is considered to be genuine he had interlarded with the rest, to leave the mass and give it the greater air of authenticity. In his lodging were found an immense collection of writing tools, inks of different kinds and tints, old copy-books, blank paper torn out of old books, and innumerable exercises in imitation of the handwriting of more than 50 eminent individuals of Tasso's time. The count's sentence was not known on the 10th of March.

MUSIC.

NATIONAL IRISH MINSTRELSY.—We are glad to perceive that Mr. White, the Irish melodist, continues his highly popular entertainments, at the Hanover-square Rooms, with gradually increasing success, and that arrangements are being made for gratifying the lovers of Irish music by holding a Grand Bardic Festival, to be got up on an unprecedentedly magnificent scale, at one of the royal theatres. We cannot doubt that there is sufficient Irish patriotism in London to compensate this talented and enterprising gentleman for his novel and interesting undertaking. Mr. White's last entertainment was entitled "A Night with Moore," on which occasion he delivered a beautiful lecture on the national minstrelsy of Ireland, in which full justice was done to the genius of the bard of Erin. The conclusion of the lecture we considered exceedingly appropriate. "My imagination leads me," said Mr. White, "at this moment to behold 'the bard of love' in the evening of his day, after a life of genius variously and honourably employed, peacefully reclining under the shade of his well-won laurels, enthroned amid a brilliant circle of those fit worshippers at the shrine of Irish genius whose 'Sensitive hearts and sun-bright eyes' he celebrated in his youth, and thus exclaiming aloud in the fullness of heart—

'When youth's bright days are o'er,
And hope's young fancies fled;
And boyhood's dreams no more
Their halo round me shed—
When smiles that led me on
Through pleasure and through pain,—
When all those joys are gone
How can I love again?'

DRAMATIC AND MUSICAL CHIT CHAT.

HANDEL IN ITALY.—It is with pride and pleasure we learn that the "Messiah" of our adopted musical Samson was to be produced at the Conservatoire of Milan during Passion-week. This shows there are yet some in Italy who have a taste beyond rouding and unmeaning *fioretture*. We question very much, however, if ample justice can as yet be done to that immortal work, even in the land of song—particularly in its choruses, which require long study and habitual acquaintance.

FINE NAMES.—Mlle. Löwe is shortly to appear at Genoa, in the opera of "Nabucodonasor," with the tenore Eugenio Musick and the basso cantante Raffaele Feriotti.

NATIONAL ENCOURAGEMENT.—We have heard that a certain illustrious personage at Madrid is about to erect a theatre for the exclusive production of native opera. If certain illustrious personages in our land were to follow the example, we should not so often read of the triumphs, in other lands, of exiled "sons of song!"

SHE WOULD AND SHE WOULD NOT!—It is with great pleasure we hear that the celebrated vocalist Mrs. Wood has returned from the gloom of a convent to the domestic cheerfulness of her home. We indulge in a reasonable hope that we may once more be gratified—nay, delighted—by hearing her "discourse most eloquent music."

NEW MUSIC.

ONCE MORE THAT LAY, MY SWEET LUCELLE. Ballad by Labitzki. Tolkein.

Labitzki, we believe, is the author of some favourite waltzes, *a la Strauss*, which have undergone all the contortions of mutilation, adaptation, and vocalisation, as in the present instance is most cruelly set forth, that is if he ever published or acknowledged such a vile parody upon Reisiger's waltz (commonly called Weber's last) as this specimen of misapplied ingenuity exhibits. The discrepancies of the two prosodies, those of the poetry (?) and music, render the thing totally unworthy of serious criticism.

THE SUMMER FLOWERS ARE NEARLY PAST. The words by Thomas Haynes Bayley, Esq.; the music by John Barnett. L. Williams and Son.

This must have been written when the early spring promises of Barnett's undoubted genius blossomed more under the influence of an ardent hope than of a matured judgment. He would not write so now, unless under the influence of carelessness or indifference—a state into which we trust he has not yet nor ever will fall, whatever we may think of his late silence and the avowed cause of it.

THE HUNTER'S BRIDE. Tyrolean Song, by Madame Stockhausen. The music by Edward F. Reinbault. L. Williams and Son.

A graceful, unobjectionable trifle, if it were not the echo of a thousand predecessors in the same style.

DEUXIEME GRAND CONCERTO EN F mineur, pour le Pianoforte; dédié a Madame Anderson (de Londres). Par Frederic Chopin (de Varsovie). Wessell and Stapleton.

The opening *tutti* of this concerto is spirited and well conceived: the subject at page 2, first played by the wind instruments, and then taken up by the violins, is graceful and agreeably plaintive; but we do not exactly understand the connection between bar 5 (stave 3) and bar 1 (stave 4); neither is the harmony of bar 1 (stave 5) unexceptionable. But the chief fault of this composition is its restless excursions, its total want of figure, and scantiness of melody. The same passages for the two hands to be played simultaneously (with which every movement in this concerto abounds) produce a certain forcible effect, it is true; but such *tour de force* are not in the genius of the instrument; it has been shown to be capable of higher and better things; and he who makes it a *corde volante* to twirl his dexterities upon injures and debases it, at the same time that he compromises his own character as a musician.

INDIAN QUADRILLES, ROYAL SCOTCH QUADRILLES, ROYAL HIGHLANDERS' QUADRILLES, MEDLEY COUNTRY DANCE, THE DUKE OF CORNWALL QUADRILLES, composed and arranged by John Weippert for the Pianoforte. Weippert, Soho-square.

It would be uselessly taking up our own space, and, what we value more, the attention of our readers, if we were to review this *fasciculus* of quadrilles *seriatim*. There is little or no real difference between one set of quadrilles and another, so far as true music is concerned. As long as they are *metronomically* constructed it is no matter whether they proceed from Kam-schatka or Otaheite—India or the Highlands of Scotland. Moreover, whatever *Mons. Quadrille* touches he mutilates, and therefore we are not much inclined towards his habitual desecrations. Since the first set of the "Lancers" we have had nothing but arrangements and derangements of what should have been held sacred in the heart. By the way, we should like to know what is the meaning of the lithographic portrait of an elderly gentleman on the title-page of "The Duke of Cornwall Quadrilles." May there not be an error of the press, and for "Cornwall" read "Devonshire?"

CHESS.

Solution to problem No. 21.

(White to move and mate in four moves, but not with the Pawn, as stated last week by mistake.)

WHITE.
R to Q R 8th ch K takes R
B to Q 5th ch K to Q Kt sq
R to Q R 8th ch K takes R
B P one square, and checkmate.

We must defer the chess problem until next week.



THE FASHIONS.

Paris, Rue Chaussee d'Antin, April 17, 1843.

Mon cher Monsieur.—Our great and long-expected fete of Longchamps is at length passed, and a more triste and sombre affair, so far as fashion is concerned, has not been witnessed for many years; indeed, so poor was the assemblage, that it would be unfair to form any judgement of our fashions by what was observable there; I shall, therefore, confine my observations to costumes I have met with in the public streets, in public promenades, and in those reunions wherein are to be seen the most fashionable women whom Paris can boast, and whose invariable good taste is a guarantee for the excellence of everything they wear. In the first place let me remark that the approaching season does not appear to have diminished in the slightest degree the vogue for black lace; on the contrary, it would appear to be an article of indispensable necessity in the completion of every description of toilette. We see it produced in every shape and form, lace camails, lace scarfs, lace flounces, and lace trimmings; in fact, it appears to be an article of general use and general fashion. In our public promenades I have remarked, with much pleasure, the appearance of robes in Chinese Pekins of a dark colour, ornamented in alternate squares by an embroidery of pearl-coloured gauze, disposed lozenge fashion. The corsage of these robes is half high, with a triple fold, the front trimmed with a puffing of the same stuff laid upon the fold from the middle of it for about one half of the corsage, whence it springs on each side to the epaulettes; an edging of pearl-coloured gauze placed upon the fold serves for a border, and the sleeves are quite plain. Another robe I observed was made of dark-coloured cashmere, worked in spots upon the front of the skirt. The corsage of this dress was high and plain, but entirely covered with embroidery; the sleeves plain, and worked in the form of Hungarian dresses. Both of these costumes were very pretty and very graceful. As a general observation, I am inclined to say, though I do not attach much importance to the alteration, that at the present moment robes are made somewhat longer, but less wide, than has been the fashion lately. The corsage of full-dress robes is plain, pointed, and made in three parts; half-dress robes are gathered in the back, and have the front plain, with three large plaits. It is very difficult, at the present moment, to say what is the prevailing mode in hats or capotes, or to give any positive details for some few days yet to come. So far, however, as I can judge, I should say they were worn with the passe small, but with long side-pieces coming low on the face. The course of a very few days, however, will enable me to give more accurate details upon this subject.—I have already mentioned to you the very general use of the hair tresses for under petticoats: the improvements that have been made in this invention and the perfection to which it has been brought are perfectly marvellous, and, as you may suppose, add greatly to the set of the upper garment. The article of pocket-handkerchiefs still continues to be made as much an article of luxury as ever, and, really, the taste with which they are got up here is beyond all praise. Only very recently I had an opportunity of examining some destined for the trousseaux of three very high and distinguished families, and I declare to you I have seldom or never seen anything more beautiful either in design or execution. The embroidery on them was perfectly exquisite; the lace and the blazonry together gave them an air of extraordinary richness; and the whole formed a tout ensemble singularly elegant. I trust my next communication may be more valuable. In the mean time I must bid you adieu.

HENRIETTE DE B.

TO THE COMET.

"Thereby hangs a tail."—SHAKESPEARE.

Lope wanderer of the trackless sky!
Companionless! Say, dost thou fly
Along thy solitary path,
A flaming messenger of wrath—
Warning with thy portentous train
Of earthquake, plague, and battle-plain?
Some say that thou dost never fail
To bring some mischief in thy tail:
For ignorance doth ever see,
Wrapped in its vain credulity,
Coupled some dire mishap with thee.
Rare visitant! Since last thy light
Flamed on the starry brow of night
How much of change—of weal and woe—
Hath mingled in this scene below!
And thou the while, with thy lightning wing,
Whither hast thou been journeying?
Other systems hast thou been near,
Whose peopled planets have looked on thee
With the like feelings of awe and fear,
Eager to dive, as we are here,
Into the depths of thy mystery?
Or, of a higher intelligence,
Can they discern thy purpose clear,
And note the way thou dost dispense
The bounties of Beneficence?
Baffler of human wisdom! when
Wilt thou disclose to mortal ken
The wondrous mystery round thee
thrown—
Thy purpose and thy being make
known?
What art thou? Riddle of the sky!
Thou puzzle of philosophy!
Thine office what? Hath human wit
In vague surmise conjectured it?
Or Science e'er one scheme resolved
Which hath aright the problem solved?

If true, there's then no fear thou'lt
smoke us;
For quoth he (surely not to joke us),
"I'll solve the riddle—locus-pocus—"
"Tis nought but rays drawn to a focus!"
So doth sagaciously explain
The marvel of thy fiery train.
Or, if we cannot credit these
So fanciful hypotheses,
Shall we one jot be nearer right,
If in opinion we unite
With chymists, in thinking thee
A mass of electricity,
Which round Creation's skirts doth run,
Collecting fuel for the sun?
Art thou, as some incline to think,
With other worlds connecting link?
Or, if thou'rt neath Sol's sole dominion
(As seems most orthodox opinion),
What is the twofold power which still
Fashions thy course and speed at will?
First drives thee on a headlong race
Far in illimitable space;
And then, anon, with slackened pace,
As wearied, homeward turns thy face?
Joining with force centrifugal
Its opposite, centripetal,
In mixture strange—as sometimes seen
'Mong mortals in this snug terrene.
Just as some maids, if lovers burn,
Quick into icicles will turn;
But, shouldst thou ardour cool, why then
Melt into loving mood straightway:
As though, when the calorific went
From one 'twas into t'other sent.
So, when thou'rt furthest on thy course
The sun exhibits most his force;
And thou exertest most thine own
When nearest thy monarch's burning
throne.
But 'tis in vain we speculate
On what may be thy mystic state:
Vague guesses all! We cannot part
The gloom which hangs o'er what thou
art.
Enough for us—thou dost fulfil
The mandate of Jehovah's will—
On thine erratic mission sent
Wide through the starry firmament.
As genius on its devious way—
Though to the plodding sons of care
Lawless it seems to go astray—
Hath its appointed limits there:
So thou, though seemingly run riot,
Art bound by the Almighty fiat—
Urged by the same unerring Cause
That gave the circling planets laws!
J. LATELY.



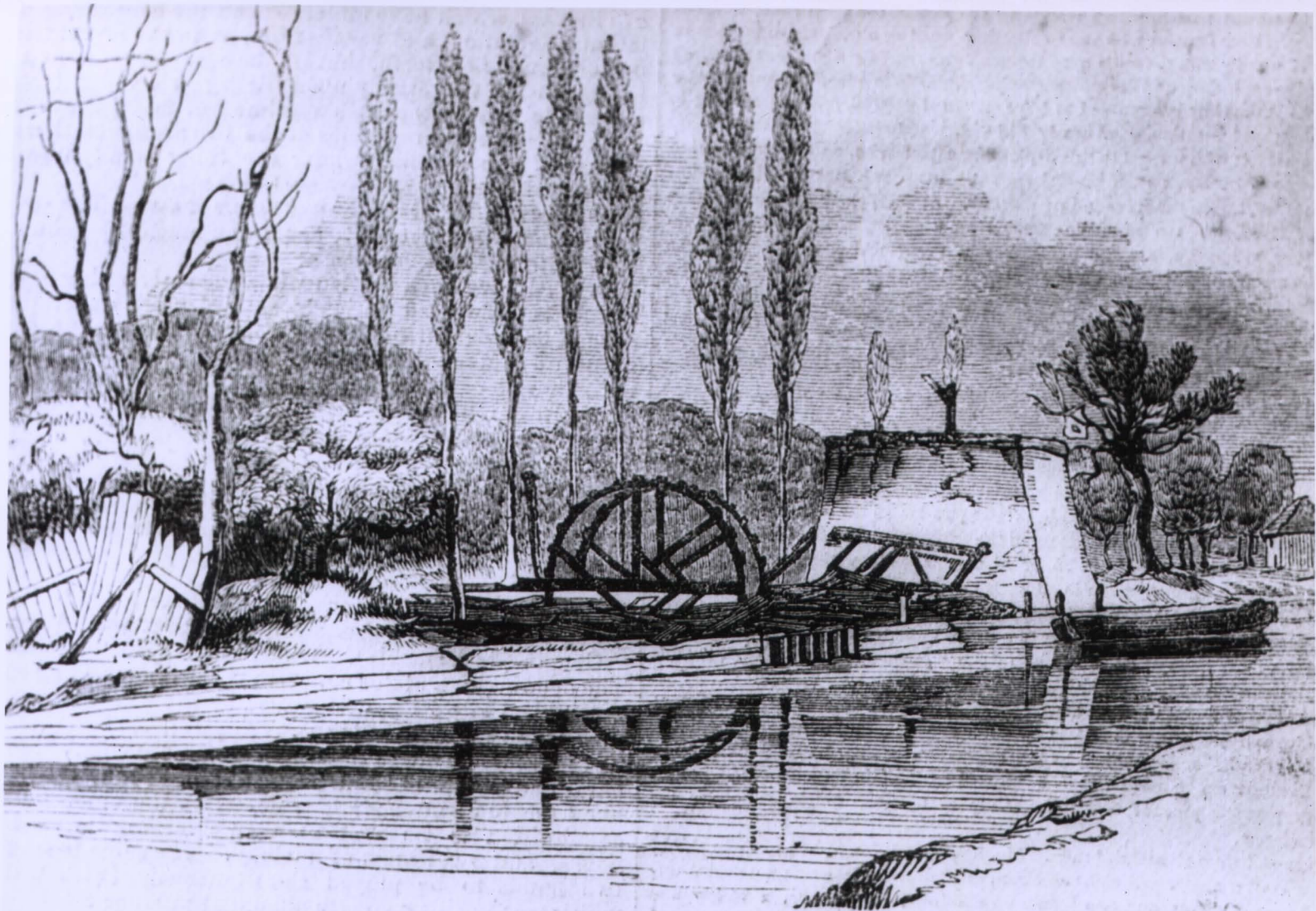
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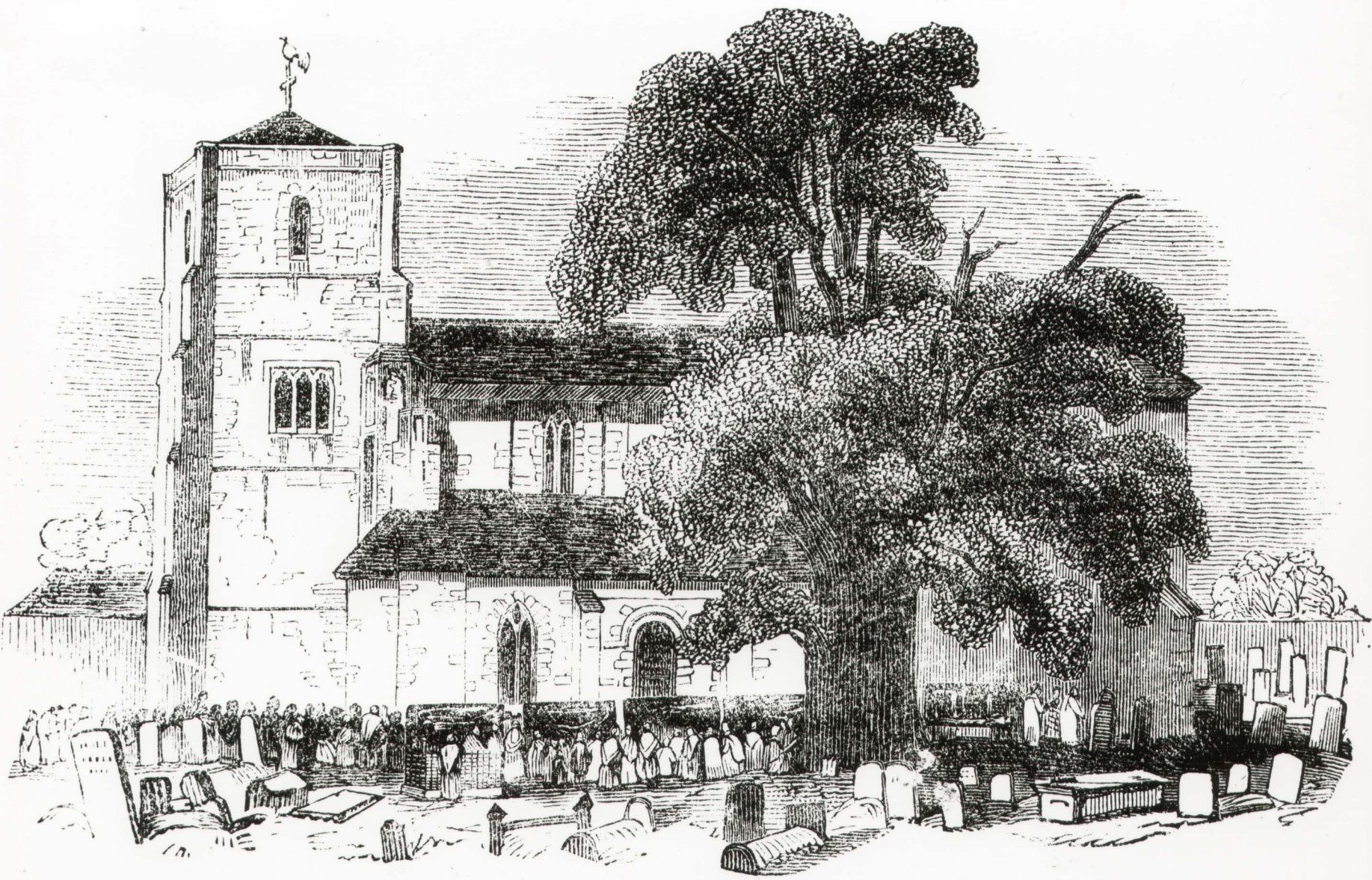
FIRST EXPLOSION.



RUINS OF THE FOURTH MILL.



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WALTHAM ABBEY—FUNERAL OF THE UNFORTUNATE WOMEN.



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1843