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LORD ORFORD'S
JOURNAL
1774,

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LORD ORFORD'S

VOYAGE

ROUND

THE FENS

IN 1774.



DONCASTER
EDWIN WHITE, PRINTER AND STATIONER, 71, FRENCH-GATE.

Received by
Gough Add. Cambridge
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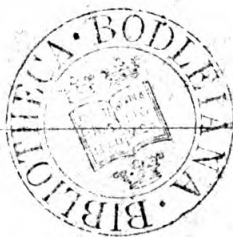
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PREFACE.

I have thought this short narrative of a voyage through the Fens, made nearly a century ago, worthy of being preserved and perpetuated in print.

The Earl of Orford, who projected and carried out this periplus of the Fens, was George, the third earl. He was a Lord of the Bedchamber to King George the Third, and is principally remarkable as having sold the fine collection of pictures, known as the Houghton Gallery, to the Empress of Russia. The pictures had been collected by his Grandfather, Sir Robert Walpole, the celebrated Prime Minister. Lord Orford died in 1791,

and was succeeded in his title by his uncle,
the well-known Horace Walpole.*

The Lord Sandwich, so often mentioned in
this account of the voyage, was, I believe, at
that time the First Lord of the Admiralty.

J. W. CHILDERS.

Cantley, July, 1868.

Journal of Mr. Thomas Roberts,

VOLUNTEER ON BOARD THE FLEET.

THE Ships destined by Lord Orford for cruising in the narrow Seas of Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire, and of Norfolk and Suffolk, 1774, being fitted out and completed at Deptford and Ely, arrived in the month of July on the River Martin to take in their stores.

On the 16th, everything being ready, his Lordship, with his Officers and Servants, came on Board at Highbridge,* and a quarter after 12 gave Orders for departure.

The Fleet, of which his Lordship was Admiral and Commander-in-Chief, consisted of four sail of the Line, The *Whale*, The *Alligator*, The *Shark*, and The *Dolphin*; three Tenders (*viz.*),

* A Bridge apparently on the Brandon River.—J. W. C.

The *Pristis*, The *Centaurus*, and The *Chimera* ; The *Fireaway* Bumketch, and The *Cocoa Nut* Victualler. The whole Fleet, on account of the narrowness of the River, was drawn up in one line, and, the wind being contrary, towed through the straits of Martin by a horse into the River Ouse, through which we passed by the same conveyance about six leagues to Salters Lode, a narrow strait at the entrance of the River Nene, and attempted to pass, but, for want of water, were forced to put back, and we anchored that night in the Ouse within a Cable's length of the Straits.

At 5 o'clock in the morning of Sunday, the 17th, the Fleet weighed Anchor, and, it being tide of flood, passed the Straits with ease and safety, and was towed up the Nene in the same manner as on the Ouse.

July 17th.—Sunday, the Fleet weighed Anchor about six o'clock, and entered the River Nene at Salters Lode, and passed by Nordelph, Outwell, Upwell, and March, four fair and handsome Towns on the banks. The Churches are large and well built, the houses clean, but the inhabitants meanly clad and dirty, and, being on account of the day unemployed, assembled in crowds on both sides of the River to view and admire so uncommon a sight. Nothing remarkable happened in our passage. We pursued our

course through the same River five miles west of March, and anchored about nine o'clock at Whoresnest Ferry, seven leagues from the junction of the Nene with the Ouse.

WHORESNEST, *Monday, 18th.*—The Fleet weighed Anchor at six in the morning, and having towed about a mile up March River, anchored again at Flood's Ferry, where the Nene empties itself into the March River; here the Admiral breakfasted, and the Fleet was supplied with fresh provisions, milk, eggs, potatoes, &c. At nine we weighed again, once more entered the Nene, through which we continued our course about six leagues, to within a mile of Whittlesey Meer. In our passage we were obliged to break up four Bridges, which were not high enough for our vessels; the first was about a mile from the Entrance of the River, which, being built of wood and very old, was soon effected; the next, Cuckold's Haven, called Horn Bridge, required the assistance of Carpenters and others, who, raising the Bridge by means of a Jack, and wedging it up, suffered the Ships to pass; the same means were made use of about a mile further, at Heron's Bridge, or Middle Meer Bridge, and again at Palmer's Bridge, where we arrived about nine o'clock, and, having passed a little way on, cast Anchor for the night

PALMER'S BRIDGE, *Tuesday 19th.*—The Fleet

weighed Anchor at half after five, and towed to the end of the Nene, where it joins Whittlesey Meer; here we stopped to Breakfast, and at eight o'clock undertook a sailing race in the boats over a part of the Meer, about three miles in length, to the entrance of the old Nene, now called Fasset's Sluice. Lord Orford sailed in the *Pristis*, Mr. Farrandon in the *Chimera*, and myself in the *Centaurus*. We set off with a brisk gale, and bore to windward for about two miles; then tacking before the wind, reached the Sluice in fifteen minutes. The whole Fleet followed under sail of the *Whale*, and came in not long after, when we all proceeded down the Nene, which is here very narrow, foul, full of weeds, and very difficultly navigable; by the help of Sails and Sprits we reached Fassets Bridge, about four miles distant from the Meer. A mile further, we came to Horsey Bridge, and at four o'clock in the afternoon arrived at Peterborough, where we pass'd Stanground Sluice into Moreton's Leam. As soon as we entered the Leam, we cast anchor to dine, and at five passed down the new Sluice as far as the new Bridge, where we anchored for the night, and saw the Races on the course from the bank.

PETERBOROUGH, *Wednesday, 20th.*—Afforded nothing interesting to our Naval Affairs. We towed up the Town Bridge, where a few repairs

were done to our rigging. Some provisions were brought in, and the Admiral purchased a Boat. His Lordship did not go on shore, having received a hurt on one of his legs a few days before. At eight Mr. Duggin came on board, and soon after the Revd. Mr. Jemage, Vicar of Peterborough, with the most obliging offers of assistance. We dined. In the Evening we fell down to our former Station on the Sluice, and saw the Races from the Bank, as we had done yesterday.

PETERBOROUGH, *Thursday, 21st.*—This day passed like the preceding. In the morning we were towed to the Town Bridge, where we dined, and soon after return'd to our Nightly Station. In our passage thither we went through an exceedingly heavy storm of rain for about half an hour, which made its way into the Cabins, and wetted the Bedding very much.

Friday, 22nd.—At six in the morning the Fleet weighed Anchor, and, departing immediately from the New Bridge, towed up to the Sluice into Moreton's Leam, and when we got to the Lock at the entrance of the Nene, anchored there for Breakfast. About nine the whole Fleet passed the Lock, and proceeded along the Nene by towing and the help of the Whale's Sail to Whittlesey Meer, where we arrived at two o'clock, and at about half a mile

from our Entrance the Admiral took his Station on the north side, where we cast Anchor, and still remain.

From Peterborough to Whittlesey Meer, about seven miles distant, the whole Country on both sides the Nene is flat to a great extent, but appears to be very fertile, productive of fine grass, and full of cattle. At Horsey, a small Village on the north side of Nene, there is a bridge with a Toll-Gate, and near the Bridge two Bars across the River, which gave our tallest Ships no small difficulty to pass; the Whale, on account of her chimney in the roof, was obliged to be forced down, and the rest had not a quarter of an Inch to spare. We saw very few Men, Women, or Children in our way; but the Oxen and Sheep, the principal inhabitants of all this Country, left their dinner, and in many places came to the banks of the River to stare at us, and seemed to say they had never before beheld so grand and pleasing a sight.

WHITTLESEY MEER,

Saturday, July 23rd.

9TH DAY.

Sunday, the 24th.—The Ships kept their Station in the Meer. A great number of Boats, with the inhabitants of the Country, came to

view us, and spent the afternoon in sailing about. Nothing particular happened in the course of the day, and at night all went to bed in the Fleet.

10TH DAY.

Monday, 25th.—Lord Sandwich, attended by Captains Hotham and Walsingham, Mr. Bates, and Mr. King, breakfasted with the Admiral on board the Shark, and invited him, Mrs. Turk, &c., to dinner board his Fleet. The dinner consisted of four dishes of boiled Pike and Perch, which had just before been caught in the Meer, and a great variety of cold meats, tongues, Chickens, &c. Dinner ended, his Lordship, Mr. Bates, and Mr. King entertained the Company with a few Catches; and the rest of the day was spent in sailing on the Meer, and taking up the trimmers, by means of which his Lordship had taken above twenty brace of very large Perch and Pike.

11TH DAY.

Tuesday, 26th.—The Admiral having yesterday invited Lord Sandwich to dine with him this day on board his Fleet, his Lordship, with his Officers and Attendants, together with Sir Wm.

Bickerton, came on board the Shark about three o'clock, the wind being pretty high at s.w. and the sky cloudy, and soon after increased to a violent storm of Thunder, Lightning, and Rain, which continued at least an hour. It did not, however, interrupt our dinner, and before it ended, afforded a small matter of entertainment, some bets being made on its continuance, &c. Before six it ceased, and his Lordship, &c., took leave of the Admiral with three cheers, fired a Gun, and steered his course to the south, with a brisk Gale.

12TH DAY.

Wednesday, July 27th.—At nine this morning the Fleet weighed Anchor, and sailed from Whittlesey Meer into the Nene, and proceeded on that River in the same manner it had done on the 19th. It got to Fasset Bridge at eleven, and moor'd just below it to wait for the Admiral, who staid behind on the Meer to take up his trimmers. At twelve his Lordship arriv'd, and brought with him some Pike, F'els, and Perch. While we waited at this place, Sam, one of the foremast men, fell from the gunwale of the Alligator into the river: he was soon taken up, and received no other hurt than a fright and a sopping. We arrived at Peterboro' at six, and

passed on about a mile further, near Sir Robert Barnard's, where we had a full view of the west front of the Minster, and anchored there for the night.

Sir Robert Barnard's House is a square stone building of three stories, not very modern, and stands in a very pleasant small paddock, a little beyond which is Longthorp, a small village where there is a large Stone Tower, formerly used as a fortification; and on the highway of the same village stands an ancient Stone Cross. Here also is a Chapel, in the yard of which are many gravestones, and some poetical inscriptions, one of which, being in a style not usually met with in such obscure places, is here transcribed :—

From human ills remov'd, from every woe
Which Youth or Age is doom'd to undergo ;
Compos'd, Serene, I've gain'd the happy shore,
Where Sickness, Pain, and Sorrow are no more.

13TH DAY.

Thursday, 28th.—This morning the Admiral and his three Officers, sailed down the River in boats to the Town, and, after giving some directions for rigging, got into a Post Chaise at eleven to go to Spalding. His Lordship intended to take fresh horses at Deeping, a pretty good Town about ten miles from Peterboro, but, not

being to be had, we proceeded with the same horses to Spalding, and arrived there, at the White Hart Inn, at half after two, where we dined. At five we rode up to the Course, where three horses started the first heat, the second only two, which being won by the same horse as the first, the Races ended at six. We then set off for Peterboro, and got to our Fleet before ten.

14TH DAY.

Friday, 29th.—The Admiral having been invited to dine with the Bishop of Peterboro' this day, his Lordship, with Mr. Farrington and I, went to the Palace at three o'clock. The Dean also dined there, and we met with a most agreeable and polite reception. At seven the Company broke up. The Admiral returned on board, and I went to the play with Mr. Image. We were entertained there with "She Stoops to Conquer," the "Mayor of Garrett," and a Masquerade. Some of the Characters in the play were very well performed, particularly Miss Hardcastle and Tony Lumpkin; and the worst part of it was, that I could not get out until eleven o'clock.

15TH DAY.

Saturday, July 30th.—At six o'clock in the

morning the Fleet left her moorings above Peterboro', and passing through Standground Sluice, sailed along the Nene to Horsey Bridge, where we stopped, and went on shore to see a Roman Camp, adjoining to the Road leading from Horsey Bridge to Whittlesey.

Whatever it may formerly have been, nothing more is to be seen than a bank or mound of Earth in a square form, rising about eight or nine feet above the level ground about it, and, like that covered with grass. From hence, the wind no longer serving, the Fleet was towed the rest of our way to Whittlesey Meer by Hippopotamus, where we arrived for the third time at one o'clock, and proceeded about half a league along the western shore, cast Anchor near Sandwich Point, a quarter of a league to the east of Trundle Meer, having the towns of Stilton, Yaxley, and Fasset in view.

16TH DAY.

Sunday, 31st.—This morning, at Eight, the Admiral order'd three sailing boats out to try the *Pristis*, his Lordship's favourite, with her enlarged sails, against the *Chimera* and the new boat, the *Swallow*, the command of which his Lordship has conferred on Captain Turk. We set off from the Fleet before the wind across the

Meer—the Admiral in the *Pristis*, with main and jib sails, attended by two foremast men; Mr. Jarvis in the *Chimera*, under main and jib sails, also attended by one seaman; and I in the *Swallow*, under mainsail only, and with one seaman. We were to sail to the farther end of the Trimmers, which the *Swallow* reached first, and, having all attended the taking up the fish, endeavoured to sail back to the Fleet; the *Swallow* got nearest, but maugre all our efforts after trying for more than an hour, were forced to take our Oars, there not being wind enough to tack with. In the afternoon, several boats, full of people, came to view us, as on Sunday last. Some of them, fixing in the Meer, regaled themselves with smoking, drinking, and fishing, and seemed as happy as at a fair.

17TH DAY.

Monday, August 1st.—At Eight, the Admiral and his Attendants sailed from the Fleet in three boats, to take up the Trimmers; and, besides several Jack and Perch, caught two large Eels, differing from one another in Colour and the shape of their heads.

At Eleven the Admiral set off again to fish at a distant part of the Meer, and Mrs. Turk

accompanied him. Before one the wind grew high, and, increasing to a storm, blew them out of sight. I dispatched Mr. Arnold, in his large boat to their assistance, but he could not reach them. However, with a good deal of difficulty, they all return'd safe by three o'clock.

In the beginning of the storm, the Bumketch slipt her cable and blew off across the Meer, and had got a considerable way before it was known. Two of our Seamen, all that were left with the Fleet, went off in the Swallow, and with much difficulty and some danger brought her back.

At three, Mr. Parsons, with six other Gentlemen, arrived in his own boat, and dined with the Admiral on board the Shark.

18TH DAY.

WHITTLESEY MEER, *Tuesday, 2nd.*—At six this morning the Fleet weigh'd Anchor, and sail'd across to Whittlesey to the south side near the entrance of the Nene, now called Orford Bay, and, having but little wind, did not get there till eight. The Admiral, having committed the command of the Fleet in his absence to Rear-Admiral Turk, staid behind on the Meer to take up his Trimmers.

Hippopotomus, who, though a Sea horse, loved grass and ease as well as any land horse what-

ever, by being taken out of an adjoining meadow and brought to the Fleet, hung down his head, and looked very melancholy, as if, like some foreigners, he did not like his own Country best. At half after ten we entered the Nene, and, not having any wind, were towed along to Palmer Bridge, where we arrived at twelve. Four men went on shore, and soon raised it enough for the Ships to pass under.

At half after one we got to New or Middle Meer Bridge, where the Admiral and the rest of the Company joined us. Here we were obliged to wait for the Carpenters to raise it, and it was between three and four o'clock before we could pass.

At half-past four we got through Horn or Hall's Bridge, and falling about a mile down the river cast Anchor, and dined at five o'clock with the same company as yesterday, except Mr. Mortimer. At seven we weighed Anchor, and were towed about a mile down the River, by Hippopotomus, where we entered a narrow Serpentine and fishy creek at least a mile, which brought us into the Ramsey Meer about eight o'clock, and pushed on to the Middle, where we anchored for the night.

THOMAS ROBERTS.

Journal of a Voyage Round the Fens,

PERFORMED BY THE EARL OF ORFORD IN THE YEAR 1774.

BY MR. GEO. FARRINGTON,

VOLUNTEER ON BOARD THE FLEET.

1ST DAY.

THE Fleet being rendezvoused at High Bridge, in the Straits of Martin, on Saturday, July 16th, Lord Orford came on board, and at Twelve A.M. the Fleet weighed Anchor, and about twenty minutes past, Towed away, the wind due west. The Sail was not spread, the wind blowing from a contrary point. At twenty minutes past One o'clock P.M. entered the Brandon river, through the Straits Mouth, and halled westwards. The Country bounding the Straits and this part of the River, is a continued Marsh, until you gain sight of

Southery, a neat Village at a small distance from the Banks, where there is an appearance of Cultivation.

At Three o'clock P.M. the boats were ordered for fishing, in which we met with no success, the Muddiness of the water, and the great quantities of weeds which floated along the current, frustrating every attempt for that purpose; returned to the Fleet, which had proceeded up the River, and at Five o'clock P.M. passed Littleport, where the Brandon river Empties into the Ouse. The Fleet cast Anchor with an intent to fish, this place abounding with fine Perch. The same obstruction obliged us to desist, and pursue our course, having the Isle of Ely on the left, and steering N.W. until we arrived at Denver Sluice, which is a noble Bridge of stone Erected across the river Ouse to prevent the adjacent parts of the fens being overflowed; its utility has been much Obstructed, and many inconveniences it is productive of, which more than counterbalance the benefits derived from it. We passing this river to Salters Lode, attempted to enter the river Nene at half-past ten, but were prevented by the low water at its Mouth, and forced to put back and anchor in the Lode until a flux of the tide should carry the Fleet over the Bar.

Fine, with but little wind.

2ND DAY.

July 17th.—At three o'clock went upon a scouting party to examine the country, which we found flat, but very pleasant. Saw Downham, a small market town upon the Lea. At our return, found the Fleet had passed the bar into and anchored up the river at Nerthea. Sailed forty minutes after nine o'clock a.m. The banks are furnished with plentiful crops of barley and mustard, seed and hemp; and the prospect from on board became more entertaining than the preceding day, during which the high banks that enclosed the river concealed the adjacent country. The river was clear, and without weeds, and our course uninterruptedly pleasant. Upon the banks, near Outwell, we observed the white poppy very plentiful. This town is built along the banks of the river, and hath a church in the gothic taste much superior to the extent or style of the place. It is equally remarkable for the ugliness of the inhabitants as for the handsomeness of the church—a disagreeable sallow complexion, broad flat nose, and wide mouth predominating amongst them. They are a mixture from a Dutch colony, which we were informed had settled here at the time of the Revolution. At this place we passed through a good stone bridge near the

church, there is one much inferior at the extremity of the town, both which, and the banks, were crowded with the inhabitants to gaze at the novelty of our appearance, to which they frequently exclaimed they had never seen the like. About a mile from this place we passed through Upwell, built in the same manner with the former along the river, with this distinction, the church is inferior, but the town much better built. There the bridges of the same number, and of wood. Beyond this town we found the country change its appearance into an open flat country, called Ensimoor. In our course from this place a toll was demanded at crossing the river, which evidently appeared to be an imposition, and occasioned some altercation on being refused, which, however, was persisted in to the mortification of the toll-man. The Fleet anchored near March, but the banks were immediately covered by people whom the report of the Fleet's arrival assembled. At four o'clock we weighed anchor, and sailed through March, which is the best town we have seen in the voyage. There are many very good houses, and the town in general was well built. There are gardens before most of the houses, which run down to the waterside, and greatly added to our pleasure by the variety of colours their borders afforded.

At this place we parted with Mr. Metcalf, whose company had hitherto afforded us much entertainment. The present populousness of this and the other towns we passed gave us no idea of their being in any degree depopulated. This being a day of rest, all the inhabitants of the places were met together. This river Nene, above this place, runs between two open moors—that on the left named Ranson Moor, on the right Norwold Green—on which there were cattle and some few sheep grazing. The evening proved hazy, and the wind continued full in our teeth. We attempted to fish, but caught nothing. Anchored in the river Nene, about five miles distance from Ramsey Meer, at half-past six o'clock p.m.

3RD DAY.

Monday 18th.—At five o'clock a.m. the Fleet weighed anchor, and about six arrived at Flood's Ferry, where the river Nene meets Whittlesey Dyke, which runs up to that town, and communicates in a direct line with the same river at Standground Sluice, our course lying through Whittlesey Meer. The Fleet was ordered to keep the river which runs to the south-west. We found the breadth of it very much contracted from this place, and about a mile up Neighbours

Bridge, erected of wood, but too low for the Fleet to pass. Orders were given to take it down, which, with the assistance of some labourers upon the banks, was soon accomplished, and the passage made with safety. Benwick Green lies upon each side of this river, and upon the left it is surrounded with rising grounds, apparently well cultivated, which are again closed by the Huntingdon Hills. As these high grounds are never overflowed, the verdure was of a superior kind to what we had hitherto met with. Soon after the river was much contracted in its channel by a close range of willows which grow in the midst of it, terminating a little from Benwick, which gave us free opportunity to admire its situation, being truly Flemish, and appeared more so from the inhabitants, who ranged themselves in small parties at the bridge and under their doors. After we left this place, the country became marsh land again, upon which some cattle were grazed. The river was more clear, and a promising appearance of finer fishing, if the time fixed for our arrival at Peterborough had allowed a trial to have been made. There are in these parts pike, jack, trout, and perch. At Bodsey Gravel we gained intelligence of the passage to be made over Whittlesey Meer, and our course thence to Peterborough. At this place there

are the remains of an ancient abbey, now converted into a dwelling-house, which we did not stop to see. Betwixt this place and Benwick we gained sight of Peterborough, and which we kept in view the remaining part of the day, though its situation often varied to us from the serpentine course of the river. There the nets were cast, and plenty of perch were found. Ramsey Meer is detached from the Nene about about half a mile by marsh ground or reeds, and opens a communication with that river by a small channel at each end. A strong westerly wind prevented the small boats entering by them, through an apprehension they might not be able to regain the Fleet against its force. The situation of Ramsey town, respecting the Meer, we apprehend, is not in the maps sufficiently to the west. Our course for some time continued westerly after we had left the Meer, before our arrival upon a line with it. The town is very much enclosed by wood, which prevented our judging of its size, though we were informed that was very considerable. Much of the land adjoining to this place appearing firm, and rich pasturage, gave an idea of its being free from the winterly inundations, though we afterwards received an assurance to the contrary. The cattle upon it are remarkably fine. The Fleet was again interrupted by Horn

Bridge, which is built over Cuckold's Point, at a mile distance from this town. Two men were despatched to Ramsey for carpenters to raise the bridge. The alarm instantly spread that the bridge was to be broken down, and the carpenters, through fear of a prosecution, refused to do it. A widow, whose estate obliged her to support Ferry Bridge, which is higher up the river, sent to implore that it might be again restored to its former state after the Fleet should have passed, which circumstance gave Lord Orford an opportunity to explain his intentions that no individual should suffer. This entirely dispelled their fears, and the works were completed soon after at both these bridges. Betwixt this and Whittlesey Meer, Palmer's Bridge again obliged the Fleet to anchor until the carpenters had raised it, after which the Fleet passed through, and come to anchor for the evening, having left the Meer to the south and keeping Whittlesey town on the north, nearly parallel.

The wind all this day continued due west.

4TH DAY.

Tuesday, 19th.—At the New Bridge. At five o'clock a.m. weighed anchor from near the bridge, and before six arrived at the mouth of Whittlesey

Meer. The wind having veered to the north, the *Pristis*, *Chimera*, and *Centaurus* were ordered to spread their sails, and ribands being chosen for their prizes, at nine minutes past eight o'clock a.m. they steered away in contest to cross the Meer. Lord Orford steered the *Pristis*, Mr. Roberts the *Centaurus*, and myself the *Chimera*. The superiority was soon apparent in favour of the *Pristis*; and Lord Orford having gained the wind, he secured his advantage more certainly every minute, and outstripped us at a prodigious rate. Mr. Roberts, mistaking the course, steered the *Centaurus* too low before the wind, and was driven on shore half a mile's distance from the entrance to the opposite river. The *Chimera* had not sufficient ballast to keep her steady in the water, and was much retarded by her irregular motion upon it; the mast was not high enough to spread sail sufficient to carry her along; but by an attention to the course the *Pristis* took, she arrived second at the destined point.

*Nexantem nodis seque in sua membra plicantem,
Tali remigio navis se tarda movebat
Vela facit tamen, et velis subit ostia plenis.*

I was presented by Mrs. Turk with a pink knot striped with white, as the second prize, and fixed it to my hat.

Lord Orford gave sailing orders to the main

Fleet, before we left them. They entered the Meers soon after, and proved excellent sailing vessels, this being the first opportunity the wind had allowed to try any of the Fleet. I fished at this part of the Meer, but the Fleet coming up, the tenders steered into the river and passed along under their sails. Whittlesey Meer is somewhat more than two miles from the points we sailed between. The water rolls with great force, and in high winds the waves swell five or six feet high, being very much exposed by the lowness of the neighbouring grounds which afford no defence against them. The river from this place is very narrow, and the Chimera requiring great breadth she was often entangled amongst the weeds, and myself in danger of being overset. At Fasset Sluice we left the boats and went on board the Fleet, making most of our way to Peterborough. At Hersey we saw a mound of earth, called by the inhabitants Herscy Hills, which from the water bears every mark of an old Roman encampment, and continuing our course up the river arrived at Standground Sluice, where the Fleet was separated. The water rises two feet above this level at the other side of the sluice, and the space betwixt the gates could only contain two of the ships at each passage. On the other side we entered a

fine large river, lying under the town, where we anchored, and, after dinner, sailed up Bedford River, which runs near the race ground, and anchored at the new bridge. The bank commands a view of the whole course, and, by fixing a telescope, I saw the races with the greatest ease. We then returned to the Fleet, which continued anchored at the new bridge for the evening.

5TH DAY.

July 20th.—New Bridge, the Bedford Cut.—Sailed in the morning up the river; anchored near the bridge. Soon after the Rev. Mr. Hemage came on board with an offer of his services to accommodate Lord Orford with any necessaries his lordship required. Mrs. Turk, Mr. Roberts, and myself accepted his offer to attend us to the cathedral, where we heard the service, saw the library, and such other things as it afforded. The cathedral is a very noble remain of gothic architecture, but in some respects departs from one great characteristic of that style, lightness. If seen upon the outside, it appears too low for the large mass which composes it, wanting spires to carry the eye from and raise it above the main body. The aisle is very fine, large, and

of a considerable height, but the pillars which support it are heavy; they are not so much enriched as those in Westminster Abbey, and the whole of the inside hath fewer gothic ornaments. The ceiling over the library is in imitation of King's College Chapel. The library contains many old books, as we were told, very well chosen. There is a stone, the remains of an ancient tomb, erected as a memorial of the massacre of an abbot and forty monks, upon an invasion of the Dane's, bearing date in 870. A bishop's cope was found in a tomb a few years ago, with a chalice and book of festivals illuminated, which are preserved in the library. We returned through the west front, which is the finest part of this cathedral, and hath more nobleness than most pieces of architecture in this same style which I have hitherto seen. Here are said to be the tombs of the unfortunate Catherine, first Queen to Henry the Eighth, and of Mary Queen of Scots. After viewing the town, we returned to the Fleet, which, after dinner, sailed to the New Bridge, and anchored near it. At five o'clock the races began, which I saw from the bank of Bedford Cut. The sport was very fine. In the evening I went with Mr. Hemale to the concert, where the music was well executed for a country band. The ladies were very well dressed, and a few of

them handsome, though no very striking faces. At half-past eleven p.m. I returned to the Fleet, which were anchored at the place I left them.

6TH DAY.

NEWBRIDGE, *July 21st.*—This morning the Fleet sailed up to Peterborough, where we breakfasted. The morning proved hazy, which prevented the design to have passed up the river in our small boats being executed. I attended Lord Orford to Mr. Pigott's to dinner. The country which encloses the road from Peterborough to this place is very pleasant, full of wood upon the right hand, amongst which are the seats of Lord Fitzwilliam and Sir Robert Barnard. The crops of all kinds of grain we saw were remarkably good. In our return we had a very fine view of the town and cathedral. After dinner we returned to the Fleet, which immediately sailed from the town to the New Bridge; and after an heavy storm of rain, which retarded the races for some time, we took possession of the bank, and saw the horses run. They were well matched.

7TH DAY.

WHITTLESEY MEER, SANDWICH POINT, *July 22nd* — This morning the Fleet left Peterborough, and anchored at Standground Sluice, where we went on shore. Meanwhile the Fleet passed through, which required a longer space than when in our direction for Peterborough, the level of the water (without which all attempts to open the gates are totally impracticable) forming more slowly, which was attributed to the water being higher, and they told it was more tedious to leave the great river than to enter it. At half-past ten a.m. the passage was completed, and we embarked again, after gaining some intelligence concerning the Meer, which is hired by different fishermen from the owners of it. Before our arrival at Horsey, the nets were cast, and a jack, with many other small fish for bait, taken. The wind was in our favour, but not strong enough to afford any assistance until we arrived at the mouth of the Meer, when the sail carried us into it. We anchored about half a mile from the western mouth of the Nene, which station commanded the whole lake, and, in a change of the wind against us, should be able to weather it, and regain the Nene for the expedition to Spalding. The Lord Orford ordered the trimmers to be

set, and the boats to be brought up, when I embarked in the Chimera. The fish afforded no diversion, upon which I tottered about the Meer, and took a more particular view of it than I had an opportunity of doing before. The wind was too inconsiderable to oppose in any direction, but, from the same cause, obliged us to row the boat. In our return we examined the trimmers, and caught two perch. This day a sail appeared in view, which was imagined to be some company who had engaged to join the Fleet about this time. Upon examination through the telescope, they proved strangers, who thus amused themselves for the evening. Our station is equally pleasant as advantageous, by giving us the most agreeable views which the lake affords of Stilton, Yaxley, and Fasset, three neighbouring towns, and an opportunity of sailing the smaller vessels to any part of the lake, which is most eligible for fishing or amusement. At Standground Sluice the river Nene is diverted from its old channel into a new one, made for it near the former.

8TH DAY.

WHITTLESEY MEER, *July 23rd.*—In the morning, went in the Chimera to examine the trimmers. A gentle gale carried her out by the

help of the sail ; but our return being against the wind we had recourse to the oars. The lines had tolerable success—seven perch and small jacks, besides one of a large size. At twelve o'clock a.m. we went out to fish. The breeze was fresher than in the morning, and the Chimera sailed before it with great swiftness. After several tacks, I anchored upon the southern shore, and met with good sport. I had taken four large perch, when the order was given for our return to the Fleet, where we found Mr. Duggin, just arrived from Peterborough. Mr. Roberts this day made an excursion up the country. From this place to Yaxley he describes as very bad fen, and the town of the most miserable kind ; beyond this place the soil is good, and produces plentiful crops of corn. In the afternoon, I arrived, with Lord Orford, in the Centaur, which had been left at Peterborough to have some additions made for sailing faster. She answered our expectations before the wind, but that dropping, prevented her being tried in any other position. We fished for a short time, when I had no success, returned to the Fleet for the evening. The vessels rolled very much during the night, and awoke the crew by their motion.

9TH DAY.

WHITTLESEY MEER, *July 24th.*—At ten o'clock a.m. the boats were ordered alongside. Lord Orford went into the Centaurus, and myself in the Chimera, to see the trimmers taken up, at which there were only one eel and two perch. The wind south-west, of which we took the advantage in crossing the Meer, and tacking to different parts of it. The Chimera I found to sail faster with a brisk side wind than in any other direction; her motion was regular and steady upon the water, and she obeyed the helm with ease. About twelve o'clock the wind dropped, and my endeavours to bear her up were almost fruitless, by the little advances she made towards the Fleet, of which we then bore upon the north-east side, the natural motion of the water carrying her off in an equal proportion to the space she gained by every tack. When I had despaired of managing her, the wind freshened, and she brought up to the Fleet, from which I instantly sailed, after taking in the necessaries for fishing, to the southern shore, where I met with very little diversion. The heat was great, and made me soon take refuge in the Shark. During the time of dinner we were surrounded by a number of boats, which curiosity had filled from the neighbouring villages to

gaze upon an appearance which now reigns the chief topic of conversation amongst these parts. Their satisfaction was clearly manifested by folded arms, unmoved looks, and silent grins of approbation. Nor were our sailors backwards in welcoming their arrival, but soon began to barter with them for kisses, and wore the ribands they stole from them as favours for their hats, which piece of gallantry made a great impression upon these country girls, who felt themselves distinguished above their companions. This day the new flag, &c. were hoisted in the Whale. I sailed a little in the Chimera this evening, and afterwards walked upon the shore with Mrs. Turk. The ground very irregular, but the novelty of a land-ramble made it agreeable.

Mr. Duggin left us to-day.

The heat scorched my hands severely, and the pain was troublesome all the day. The weather extremely clear, and the evening very pleasant.

10TH DAY.

WHITTLESEY MEER, *July 25th.*—At eight o'clock a.m. we discovered a sail upon the south-east shore endeavouring to enter the Meer and, in our opinions, bear up to the Fleet, which continued at anchor upon the

north-west coast. The wind being opposite, prevented their gaining that direction, but gave us a suspicion that Lord Sandwich was in her, who had engaged to meet Lord Orford about this time in the Meer. A servant, despatched in a boat with oars soon after, confirmed this opinion ; and Lord Sandwich, with several other gentlemen belonging to the navy, came and breakfasted on board. I went in the Chimera to see the trimmers set by Lord Sandwich taken up. The wind had fallen, and had scarce force enough to carry her along. However, by degrees, after the examination was over, she gained the southern shore, where we found an open cabin erected in the end of the boats, and dinner preparing by Lord Sandwich's servants, which consisted chiefly of the fish taken the former part of the day. We were induced to think these of a much superior relish to those taken upon the western coast, and they, in general, were of a larger size ; but could not account for this distinction in taste from any alteration in the shores or rivulets that entered upon that coast. After dinner, Lord Sandwich proposed a catch, in which he was joined by two gentlemen of the company. The reputation of his lordship's club in town had been so frequently mentioned by men of taste in music that I was extremely gratified with an opportunity of hear-

ing him sing. He afterwards gave us a solo, "The Barley Mow," which he went through with great rapidity and that festivity which is indispensable in songs of that nature. We afterwards embarked in our boats, Lord Orford steering the Chimera. We then were convinced of her incapacity of bearing up to windward; notwithstanding the tacks were very long, she gained so indifferently that we were under the necessity to furl her sails and take to the oars. We found at one of the lines this evening two fish; a perch had taken the bait, and was afterwards seized by a pike, which was unable to disgorge it, and was taken without being pierced by the hook, which was buried in the perch. The vessels rolled very much this night, and, to my ideas, appeared like a ship beating to pieces upon rocks: the water was very little agitated in the former part of this motion. This evening I perceived a number of swallows skimming along the surface of the water: Lord Orford had observed the same appearance the preceding day.

11TH DAY.

WHITTLESEY MEER, *July 26th.*—From viewing the lines, the Chimera and Centaurus, steered by Lord Orford, sailed in contest, with a light breeze, to the southern shore, where the

Centaurus anchored first, though during the first part of the race the Chimera kept ahead a considerable space. Here we fished, but I met with no sport, which, added to the intense heat of the sun (though I had made an attempt to form a shelter against it by spreading the sail), made me rejoice when the signal was given for weighing away. We again tried the vessels, but the superiority was decided as before. Upon our arrival at the Fleet, I went on board to seek that shelter which I had in vain attempted to procure upon the water, and spent the interval before dinner in reading. We had spoke with Lord Sandwich upon the water, and at three o'clock he, with the gentlemen in his company, came on board the Shark to dinner, during which a scheme was proposed to offer rewards for such vessels as should sail round a certain given point—this to be a sweepstakes, and every candidate to subscribe a sum to be fixed upon; other small premiums to be given to the inhabitants near this lake who should row in the shortest space of time round it.

About half-past four o'clock p.m. there was a storm of thunder, though chiefly at a distance, with a heavy shower of rain. The Meer rolled more than I had before observed it. After this had ceased, Lord Sandwich went on board his yacht and took leave of Lord Orford. Sir

Richard Bickerton advised to take up the anchor at one end of the Fleet, and suffer it to go with the wind, which, by preventing any opposition, would cause the rolling to cease with which we had been troubled the preceding night.

This evening there was a very heavy rain, but not attended with thunder.

12TH DAY.

*River Nene : the Fleet at anchor up the River,
west of Peterborough Bridge.*

July 27th.—This morning, at twenty minutes past eight o'clock, the Fleet weighed anchor, and gained the western mouth of the river Nene. The wind had veered to the south-west, which enabled them to use her sail. I left the vessels when they had got under weigh, and attended Lord Orford about the Meer, he steering the Swallow. The wind was very brisk, and the Chimera bore up to it very well ; but, mistaking the place where the Nene opens itself, I lost this advantage of her steadiness, and carried her to leeward, and we had much trouble to recover our track. This was only a prelude to the labours we encountered in our passage up the river to Fasset Bridge : I have before observed

upon the nature of it in this part. She then encountered the obstacles with ease comparatively with the present time. The helm had no influence, and the sails served to hinder her course by driving her constantly on shore. We dropped the sprit sail, myself and John taking our stations at the head and stern, to keep her in the river and afford assistance to the mainsail by putting her along. This seemed to retard her course, and we were obliged to furl her sails and tow her along, John hauling by a rope we fixed for the occasion from some old relics of her rigging which luckily happened to be on board, and I keeping her clear of the shore by the yard placed against her side. When we came near Fasset, the nature of the river prevented our continuing in this method, and requiring another effort of skill to combat this fresh difficulty, which was at length determined by John with a pole forcing her along, whilst I shot one of the oars a considerable part into the water and made use of it as a rudder to steer her into the track which should carry us to the Fleet. This we found to be the best scheme our troubles had hitherto suggested, and brought us in safety to Fasset Bridge, just beyond which we discovered the Fleet at anchor, and joyfully exerted ourselves to secure a cessation of our fatigues, and put a period to the anxieties our minds had suffered.

From hence we had a pleasant course to Standground Sluice. The fields yet produced frequent bands of haymakers, who constantly came to view the Fleet under sail. From Standground we soon arrived at Peterborough, and passed under the town through the bridge, the Fleet being ordered to anchor beyond that, to afford us a new view of the town and cathedral. The place where we now lay commands the western, which is the finest front of the cathedral, with a prospect of the southern side, and contracts the apparent diminution of the building sufficiently to destroy the heaviness of it. Upon our left hand there is a fine range of trees, amongst which Sir Robert Barnard has an old seat. These screen the Fleet from the winds that might incommode it.

13TH DAY.

*The River Nene near Peterborough Bridge : the
Fleet at anchor.*

July 28th.—After the duties of the morning we left the Fleet at anchor in the river Nene, and went into the tenders, Mrs. Turk and Mr. Roberts accompanying me in the Chimera, Lord Orford going in the Pristis. The orders were to steer for Peterborough Bridge, where Lord

Orford gave orders for completing some alterations he proposed in the *Pristis*, and there we got into post chaises which had been ordered to carry us to Spalding. After the ease of a ship's passage, the rugged streets of Peterborough appeared very uncomfortable. The road from this place to Deeping is very much enclosed with trees planted on each side, with intervals through which the adjacent country opens to the traveller. Though there is nothing interesting in the country itself, by a concurrence of circumstances it then appeared very agreeable:—the various verdure of the trees and fields; the prospect sometimes lying over tracts of land which were naked to the eye, but variegated in their hues; and again presenting a close woody country, intermixed with the spires of village churches, set off to the best advantage by the disposition of the sky, through which the sun scattered gleams of light, procuring those effects some of the Flemings have so well imitated. Near Deeping we passed a building which appeared to be an ancient monastery, or building dedicated to religious purposes: the time did not suffer us to be satisfied in this particular; but there is reason to think, from the house being very entire upon the outside, we might have gained good information of the internal disposition of those buildings.

Deeping is well built, considering the manner of constructing houses in most parts of this country. Beyond this place the face of the country altered very much; the horizon was very contracted, and formed by a continued wild common. Towards the west we had a distant view of the Lincolnshire hills. Spalding is a very neat town; many good houses at the entrance into it; and the situation of the church makes it a serviceable object to the appearance of the town. The spire is ornamented with little projections of stone at its angles—a mark of Gothic taste I don't remember having hitherto observed. At half-past four o'clock p.m. we went upon the course, and saw the races. The company was not numerous, but many of the farmers daughters were neat and pretty. We returned immediately after the race was decided, and brought Mr. Duggin along with us to Peterborough.

In returning to the Fleet we met with some difficulties from our ignorance of this place. I slipped from a narrow bridge into the ditch over which it lay, and afterwards wandered some time in a swampy marsh, to avoid another thick ditch which interrupted the direct line to the vessels, which I at last gained, and, changing my dress, found no other inconveniences from the walk.

The crops of corn were very fine in our

journey, and the beans stronger and more plentiful than ever I met with.

14TH DAY.

River Nene at Peterborough.

July 29th.—Sailed this morning down the river towards Peterborough with an intention to fish, but the weather proving hazy I went forwards to the town, and took a more accurate view of it than I had hitherto done. There are many very good houses dispersed through different parts of it, which, if united, would make a very handsome street, and support the expectation a stranger must form of the town, by raising his idea of it from the appearance of the cathedral, which strikes the eye at every access: according to the present disposition he must feel a disappointment. Upon my return to the river, I found the wind and current so strong that it was impossible to row the Chimera against them and gain the Fleet. With difficulty we brought her to the shore, and, having moored her securely, went through the town, and crossed some fields upon the western side of it, which led to the common, where the Fleet lay at anchor. Lord Orford having engaged to dine with Dr. Hinchcliffe, the Bishop of Peterborough, I attended his lordship in the Pristis,

which carried us with swiftness to the bridge. In the evening I was at the play in this town, and saw "She Stoops to Conquer" performed in a manner much beyond my expectation. The presence of Lord and Lady Fitzwilliam had assembled all the chief persons in the town. Having spent the remainder of the evening at Mr. Image's, he politely insisted upon showing me the way to the Fleet, at which I arrived very near twelve o'clock.

This evening was guilty of an excess, which appeared formidable to an observer of the regular hour of nine o'clock for bed-time, but fortunately not productive of any of the inconveniences which usually attend such proceedings. The wind strong, due west the former part of the day, light showers. The evening clear, and the wind much abated.

15TH DAY.

SANDWICH POINT, WHITTLESEY MEER, *July 30th.*—At five o'clock a.m. the Fleet weighed anchor from the river Nene, and passed from Peterborough to Standground Sluice; soon afterwards, passing through it, came to Hersey Bridge, near which we breakfasted. We went to view the mound of earth, which I have before mentioned, called by the inhabitants near this

place Horsey Hills. The information we gained from them was, that Cromwell had raised it as a place of strength for a party of his men. Lord Orford was of opinion he might have made this advantage of it, as a pass for this part of the country, and, the angles being formed as bastions, made it more modern than the times wherein the Romans possessed this isle.

There appears upon the east side some small vestiges of the Fosse. Perhaps it may have been filled up by the road and other alterations made upon the other sides; and being first erected by those conquerors, Cromwell converted it upon some occasion into a post for a detachment of his troops. It contains so small a compass of ground as to indicate that this could never be considered a place of consequence. From this bridge we continued our navigation, with the wind westerly, until our arrival at the mouth of the Nene, which enters that part of the Meer called Fasset's Bay. The difficulty of maintaining our course sufficiently south being mentioned to Lord Orford, he gave directions to drop the sail, and row along to Sandwich Point, which is the extremity of Fasset's Bay upon the south-west side.

After the Fleet was securely moored, we went in the tenders to examine the lines, which had been set early in the morning. Their success

was very indifferent, which Mr. Arnold attributed to the muddiness of the water, which continued to prevent any greater advantage from them in the evening. I went in the Chimera to fish upon the southern shore, but had no diversion.

16TH DAY.

SANDWICH POINT, WHITTLESEY MEER, *July 31st.*—I was this morning appointed chaplain to the Fleet, and entered upon that function by reading a sermon of Sterne's to Lord Orford and Mrs. Turk. After the duty of the morning was over, the *Pristis* and *Chimera* were ordered out; the latter had been fitted with new sails larger than her last, which were hoisted in the *Swallow*. She appeared much benefitted by this exchange, so far as we could determine by the light breeze which then blew. Having run her to the southern shore, in which she passed the *Swallow*, I threw out a line, and attended near an hour without the least reward for it; nor were the *Pristis* or *Swallow* more successful. The trimmers had this morning taken a remarkable large perch, two fine pike, and several smaller fish. After dinner I went in the *Chimera* to explore the nature and situation of *Trundle Meer*. Lord Orford, in the *Swallow*,

was the pilot through these parts. By following his course to the south-west, and steering across Trundle Reach, which is a bay upon the west shore, commencing at Sandwich Point, we entered Wells Straits, and contrary to my expectations, I entered the mouth of an open river of sufficient breadth to admit three of the tenders to sail without obstructing each other, though I had not been able to discover any division amongst the rushes which surround this shore at a very small distance. Across these straits we found nets set to intercept the fish in their passage betwixt the Meers.

The rudder of the Chimera was entangled amongst them, but by taking it off we cleared her, and continued our course to the mouth of the Trundle Meer. This is of very small extent, and filled with weeds, which forms as it were a path to the west shore. Opposite to that we entered there is another river opens, and runs up to Yaxley, from whence it is named. It is situated due west with Whittlesey Meer; the water remarkably transparent; but the weeds, which everywhere spring under its surface, prevent any attempting to fish. In our return to the Fleet, I fished from the Chimera while she was under sail and a breath of wind scarcely driving her along; and the serenity of the sun's departure, corresponding with that of

the Meer, made the conclusion of this day's amusement very pleasing. We had several boats full of the neighbouring peasants and their families to view the Fleet, after which they run their boats amongst the weeds which enclose this shore, and regaled themselves with such refreshments as they had brought.

17TH DAY.

SANDWICH POINT, *August 1st.*—Early this morning Lord Orford went in the *Pristis*. I commanded the *Chimera*; and the *Swallow* was sent with us to examine the lines, which had been set the preceding evening. There was a brisk gale from the south, and our direction lay from Sandwich Point across Fasset Bay to the eastern shore. To our astonishment, the *Chimera* lay closer to the wind, and outrun both her competitors. This was occasioned by the sprit sail of the *Pristis* being too heavy, for the *Chimera* was known to be a much inferior sailor to the *Pristis*, and, indeed, to this she bore witness in her return to the Fleet by coming in the last. After breakfast it was proposed to make a party and view Holme, a village situate about two miles distance to the westward of this Meer. We steered for the mouth of Holme Cut, which

opens into Trundle Reach to the north-west. The wind moved us very slowly, it being now almost a perfect calm. This alteration of the wind I observed to be constant every day, during the course of which it seldom varied fewer than five or six times: during this time of our stay generally a pleasant gale in the morning, which ceases about half an hour after ten o'clock a.m.; and at noon this calm is again succeeded by a brisk gale, the remaining part of the day being equally inconstant. The occasion did not subject us to the more constant winds which blow here in the rougher months, and the situation of the lake suffers no wind to pass without being affected by it. We had not before met with so strong an instance of this variation as we experienced during the course of our present scouting expedition. Down the river, which is, comparatively with many others we had passed, tolerably clear and navigable—but its sides, being enclosed with high reeds, obstruct the view of the adjacent country—we came in sight of Holme. The appearance of the place did not invite us to take a more accurate view of it on shore, being built, in the fashion of the country, of clay houses, covered with thatch, but well fenced by wood to shelter it from the weather. Upon our arrival at the entrance into the Meer, we found Lord Orford,

who had left us near Holme, waiting to put Mrs. Turk on board the Youle, as the safest vessel to encounter the waves which then rolled in the Meer with more violence than we had hitherto seen. This storm had risen quite suddenly, and in a few minutes thrown the Meer into the fermentation we beheld it.

Ac venti velut agmine facto,
 Qua data Porta, ruunt
 . . . totunque a sedibus imis.
 Una eurusque notusque ruunt creberque procellis
 Africus, et vastos volvunt in littora fluctus,
 Insequitur clamorque virum stridorque rudentum.

After the necessary preparations, we entered the Meer, and coasted along the western shore, striving with our oars to force a passage over the waves upon which we rolled. We were immediately covered by the spray from those which broke against the side of our vessel. In hopes to remove one of those causes, we altered our position, and turned the head of the Chimera against their force, by which we bore up with greater ease, and avoided being thoroughly drenched, varying in this instance from the conduct of rivers. After this alteration, we soon gained Sandwich Point, where the Fleet still were at their anchors, and found those on board moving from the great consternation they had been thrown into by this violence of the water, during which they had assembled a council to

debate upon the means of preserving themselves, and resolved, if the wind increased, to quit the Fleet to the waves, and, getting into the Cocoa Nut, run her ashore to save their lives. This alarm had been increased by one of the tenders breaking her hold, and driving with the wind across the Meer, which was fortunately recovered by the longboat before she foundered. At twenty minutes past two p.m. the storm abated in some degree, but the wind continued brisk during the remaining part of the day. At three o'clock, Mr. Parsons, from Brandon, with several other gentlemen, came up with us in the Meer, and dined on board the Fleet; after which we made an excursion in the Chimera and the Swallow. Having taken up the trimmers, Lord Orford ordered them to be set in Trundle Reach, that being the place where Lord Sandwich had met with so much success. Mr. Parsons and his company then went on shore, having no conveniences for lying upon the Meer.

This evening was colder than we had before experienced during the voyage.

18TH DAY.

RAMSEY MEER, *August 2nd.*—At half an hour after six o'clock a.m. I went in the *Pristis* with

Lord Orford to see the lines taken up, which had been set the preceding evening, where Mr. Parsons, &c. met us by appointment. We found very few fish: the baits which had been used were improper. The Fleet weighed anchor soon after we left it, and, with a gentle breeze, crossed the Meer, without accident, in forty-three minutes, and moored in Orford Bay, which forms itself upon the north-east shore, beginning at Ramsey Point, and extending to the east. The mouth of the Nene opens within this bay, near the Point, through which our course lay to Ramsey Meer. After breakfast, we went out to fish, and at the same time the Fleet bore away, returning through the river by which we first entered the Meer. The calm prevented our sport. Orders were given to join the Fleet, and we were towed down the Nene to Palmer's Bridge, where they lay until the carpenters had raised it; after which we passed that and the two others which intercepted our direction to Bodsey Gravel, where we dined, with Mr. Parsons, &c. in company. From hence we dropped down, having drawn all the people near this place to the waterside, whither they run from the hay fields and farm-houses to gratify their curiosity, and entering upon the Straits of Roberts, which opens into the Nene upon the south-west shore,

about two miles from Horn Bridge, passed through a very narrow channel enclosed with remarkable high reeds, which carried us into Ramsey Meer. I was pleased to find the entrance into a large clear basin, of which, however, the approaching darkness prevented my forming an accurate survey. In our approach to the Meer we were disagreeably saluted with the music of the gnats, and our expectations of passing through the Meer without any inconvenience from them appeared at an end; however, I escaped during the night from their attacks, which revived my hopes. Mr. Parsons went on shore at Ramsey.

From this country they export great quantities of beans to different parts of the kingdom. The rushes which grow in these meers are cut at this season of the year, and sent to supply the London cabinetmakers.

19TH DAY.

RAMSEY RIVER, *August 3rd.*—At the lines this morning we found some fine eels, a large pike, and several perch, which we accepted as a favourable omen of the diversion this Meer would probably afford in that respect. The Fleet weighed anchor, and returned through the Straits of Roberts—a name given to an entrance

upon the north-west part of the Meer from the river Nene. Up this river, above Bodsey Gravel, we entered the mouth of the Ramsey River, and landed near that town. It is built chiefly upon the banks of the river, over which they have erected three bridges—two of wood, for the convenience of an immediate passage, and the principal one of stone, consisting of one arch, from which there are two streets branching out equally good with the principal, but not so long. The houses are regularly placed; and, by the improvements lately made, there is a very good path through it upon the side of the river. Formerly there was an abbey, which bore the name of the place, of which there are few traces to be discovered at this period, the modern inhabitants having probably completed that destruction which was begun when the English monarch first asserted his own supremacy. The church appears of a later date: the principles upon which it is built are old, but the freshness of its materials do not correspond.

The situation of the town gave it very much the character of those in Holland. The people are remarked as having long teeth and strait lank hair, which did not prevent our giving them the preference to the inhabitants of all the other Fen towns we had passed, which compliment was extended to the place itself. From

hence to Huntingdon the country is a scene of rising grounds and vales, in general well cultivated. The spirit of improvement in husbandry hath reached these parts, and made them sensible of the advantages to be derived from cultivated fields above wild commons.

We passed a long extent of new enclosures from King's Ripton to Herfor, "where laughing Ceres now assumes the land," and observed several farm-houses erecting in different parts of our route, which had before this time been very scarce. There are many small villages, particularly near Huntingdon; those we passed resemble the other towns we had met with. The situations of some were very eligible.

Huntingdon appeared to be a very pleasant town, in regard to the internal construction, as also from the situation of it.

There is a bridge, consisting of four arches, built of stone, and apparently at different periods—one part retaining relics of ornaments which there are no appearances ever were upon the other. Here is an old church, which bears a monastic gloom; the architecture is heavy, particularly the mullions for the windows. From the race ground I had a view of Hinchinbroke, the seat of Lord Sandwich. The races at this place were formerly in great reputation, but are so much neglected at present, there were no

horses to run. The course is remarkably beautiful, and reckoned one of the best in this kingdom. We have a view of Godmanchester from hence, which appears a continuation of Huntingdon. We dined at the ordinary. After dinner, Lord Orford had a conversation with Baron Diemsdale, whose information respecting some customs in Russia was very entertaining. The position brought us back to Ramsey, through a very different track to that we had gone in the morning: the roads by this were much better than the other.

The Fleet was at anchor in Ramsey River, and dropped further from the town after we got on board.

20TH DAY.

TURK'S ISLAND, RAMSEY MEER, *August 4th.*— In our passage from Ramsey, we stopped at Bodsey Gravel, and went on shore to view the remains of an abbey, which are now converted into a farm-house, and so entirely metamorphosed from what they must formerly have been, by various alterations, that, after the strictest examination, it was with difficulty we traced out what appeared to have been an angle of the former building. We walked into the adjoining fields, which produced some fine cows and

sheep. There we saw a remarkable number of magpies, from which circumstance we named our anchoring place Magpie Harbour.

From hence we were towed to the Straits of Roberts, where the Hippopotamus was released from duty. There is no bank along these straits, which obliged the seamen to put the vessels into the Meer, upon the south-west of which they anchored at half an hour past eleven o'clock a.m. We immediately went in the tenders to examine the lines, and found very few fish. Afterwards we sailed about the Meer to examine the creeks, &c. and found it to be nearly circular. Its longest dimensions are from east to west, and the shortest about a mile. The boundaries are of reeds, which grow in the same manner as in Whittlesey Meer, neither of them having any firm bank near their apparent circumference. The water is clear, excepting a small tract covered with reeds upon the eastern shore, named Turk's Island.

Here are great plenty of pike, remarkable for their size and flavour. The eels are large and of a good taste: they distinguish two species of them taken in this place and its canals; the heads of the one are of a longer shape, and their skins more bright than those of the others, which are not esteemed by the inhabitants. The perch are reckoned much inferior to those

caught in Whittlesea Meer, but I was unable to taste this distinction. Fishing at Turk's Island, I took one of them. A great quantity of water was observed to rise in the Chimera as she sailed round the Meer, and upon examination she had sprung a leak in the head. The sailors immediately endeavoured to preserve her, but without effect, and the water gained upon us to a degree which made her in danger of foundering. The only resource was an attempt to regain the Fleet, in which we were successful. Upon examination, a large aperture was discovered, into which some paint had been forced, and preserved us from the present danger. She was instantly condemned as unsafe for present service, and taken in tow, till she had received a thorough repair. This evening Lord Orford entered a creek upon the east side of the Meer, which had been represented as impracticable. Upon examination, it was found to be navigable into the Nene, and a much more convenient passage than through the other straits, besides shortening the tract to Benwick considerably. This morning Mr. Roberts went on shore to examine the country, with a promise to return in the evening. We were alarmed at his failure to do it, the late accounts from New Zealand making us apprehensive on his account.

We anchored at Turk's Island for the night,

with orders to proceed at four o'clock in the morning.

Our success to-day with the lines was much more indifferent than we had met with in the course of our voyage.

A brisk wind at south-west.

21ST DAY.

WELL CREEK, *August 5th.*—Early this morning the Fleet left Turk's Island, and passed through the new explored strait without accident into the river Nene. At half-past six a.m. we left Benwick, and at Floods Ferry, where the Whittlesey Dyke falls into the Nene, stopped to breakfast. From hence we got clear of the narrow channels, in which we had been confined for some time, and Hippopotamus was eased in the performance of his office by the goodness of the banks. A poor woman petitioned for leave to fasten a boat she was paddling along to be towed by the Fleet to March, which Lord Orford granted. From hence to March the crops are less forward than we expected. They make use of burnt turf for manure, which is much disapproved by good husbandmen, as destructive to the natural soil.

Leaving March, we towed through Upwell, and dined betwixt this town and Outwell. We

saw several crops of hemp cut at the former. At Nertlea there are two drains close together, named Marshland Cut, emptying themselves into the end of Towdyke. We came to the sluices at the entrance to Salter's Lode; the water was then at the height, which hindered our proceeding through them to Denver Sluice, which had been proposed. The tide rises at this place five or six feet, and the level, when the vessels might pass, would be at two o'clock. Orders were given to moor for the evening, and take the advantage of the morning flood, to prevent accident by going through during the night. Downham appears very well situated from this place, upon the summit of a hill, covered with wood.

The morning rainy; cleared about one o'clock. The evening very pleasant.

22ND DAY.

STRAITS OF MARTIN, *August 6th.*—I was this morning awoke by the confusion amongst our seamen, in their endeavours to pass through the sluice, which they were unable to do. Some lighters, which the preceding evening came up the Ouse to enter the river Nene at this place, had neglected their advantage of the tide serving, and were now aground in the mouth of it. The

time spent in hauling them afloat had also exhausted the remaining ebb, which laid us under the necessity of keeping our present station until there was a second flux. Upon an examination, Lord Orford discovered the master was the principal cause of this delay, by his neglecting to have the lighters removed during the preceding evening, and thereby destroying the scheme which had been formed for that day's fishing; for these offences he was discharged from his office, and immediately sent on shore. At forty minutes past nine a.m. the tide again serving, we passed through without accident, and also Denver Sluice. At the latter of these, we observed a very large bank of sand forming against the eastern pier of the bridge. Upon inquiring, we learnt this to have risen from some mounds of earth which had remained from the time of rebuilding it, and has since been accumulating from the refuse thrown up by the tides. We continued our course with a pleasant gale to the south-west; and, passing Littleport Bridge, entered the little Ouse, in which we met Mr. Barnes and Mrs. Stuart, with two ladies, her sisters, who came on board, and sailed in the Fleet to Highbridge, in the Straits of Martin, at six o'clock p.m. After a pleasant voyage of three weeks, which had been performed without

accidents, through passages hitherto unattempted, and contrary to the expectations of our friends, without any inconveniences in proceeding up those rivers which are known.

At Eriswel we found Mr. Roberts, who had attempted to regain the Fleet in Ramsey Meer, but unfortunately missed it, and returned through Ely.

G. FARRINGTON.

The Admiral's Journal of the Voyage
Round the Fens,

IN JULY, 1774.

At Anchor in the Ouse, near Salters Lode.

Sunday, July 17th.—Having completely equipped and victualled the Fleet under my command, consisting of the following vessels:—*The Whale, The Alligator, the Shark, The Dolphin,* and *The Cocoa Nut* (horse-boat and victualler); *The Pristis, Centaurus,* and *Chimera,* tenders; the bumketch, *Fireaway,*—we took our departure from the Highbridge, in the Straits of Martin, at twenty minutes after twelve; weather fine. Lackenheath bearing south-east, at the distance of a mile, the wind north-west being against us, we were towed up the straits by a fen horse, called the Hippopotamus. At half after one

o'clock, we cleared the strait, which lies north and by west, and steered down the little Ouse a western course. At the mouth of the strait we took leave of Mr. Morse, who steered eastward up the Ouse in a Lackenheath boat. I ordered the Fleet to fall down the river an hundred yards below Redmore, and there to anchor, and went myself with Mr. Metcalf to angle. In flinging the casting net for bait at Mrs. Stuart's Decoy, we caught fourteen small perch. The crab, being employed at this time in scouring the bottom of the river, had filled it with floating weeds and mud, which prevented our sport. We joined the Fleet at three, and immediately weighed anchor. We arrived at the creek's end at half after four, and anchored under the eastern shore, where we dined. Weighed anchor again at seven, and, having passed through Denver Sluice without accident, arrived at Salter's Lode at half after nine. I was desirous of anchoring in the Lode, but was prevented by the low water and the gangs of barges which interrupted our passage. I, therefore, ordered the Fleet to fall down an hundred yards from the sluice, and there to anchor till the return of the tide and the morning.

Casualties :—Sam, stepping into a boat at Highbridge, ran a nail into his foot.

At Anchor near Ransom Moor, at Whore's Nest.

July 17th.—When I got out of my cabin at seven this morning, I found that our Fleet had passed through Salter's Lode Dyke without accident at five in the morning. Messrs. Roberts and Farrington, two gentlemen volunteers, had set out about four o'clock, and walked with Mr. Metcalf, to view Downham market, about two miles, and had joined the Fleet. Mr. Metcalf had joined us at Nordley Sluice, on horseback. The Fleet was advanced in the river Nene, steering west, about four miles, when I ordered it to anchor at Upwell, near a farm-house. The farmer, called Rate, an active old man of seventy-five years of age, supplied us with excellent milk for breakfast, and breakfasted with us himself on a bottle of Ringwood beer, which he commended much, and drank to the last drop. He occupied a farm of one hundred acres; kept seven milch cows. His method of husbandry, which I imagine is the course of crops in this fen country, where the soil is excellent, was as follows:—wheat, mustardseed, oats (of which fifteen coombs per acre is but a middling crop), and then if the ground be foul, hemp or flax, though a profitable crop is supposed to fill the land with weeds. Farmer Rate was a brisk man of his age; had been twice

married; had four children by his last wife, who was then living, and had four children by her first husband: she seemed of the same age with her husband, and to enjoy a good state of health, though sometimes attacked by an ague, the reigning disorder in these parts. We weighed anchor at nine o'clock; and passing through Outwell and Upwell, populous towns, we anchored at three within half a mile of March, where we dined. About a mile before we came up to the place of anchorage, a fen man on the eastern bank of the river demanded fourpence for hauling on the bank; but as he confessed it was not above a fortnight since this new tax was levied, and could give us no good reason for this novel demand, we refused to comply. He threatened to detain the horse; but, on the arrival of a fresh detachment from the Fleet, was obliged to submit. He went away, swearing heartily that we should hear from him again by an action of trespass being brought against us. We weighed anchor again after dinner. We had been attended by the numerous inhabitants of the town of March, who sat admiring our vessels on the bank of the river. And passing through the town of March, which is the handsomest we had yet seen, we advanced up the river four miles; when, perceiving the Hippopotamus was beginning to tire, I ordered the

Fleet to anchor at seven o'clock in the evening. Here a breach in the eastern bank of the river, which was repairing with bricks. The Fen on that side is called Barron Moor. The wind, the whole day directly against us, west. The sun rose and set very bright, yet we had frequent squalls of rain.

Many very old women in Upwell, Outwell, and March: the sex in general extremely ugly. The towns populous. Crops of all kinds plentiful.

Mr. Metcalf left us at March, being in expectation of finding on his return an increase of the inhabitants of Fordham. May Lucina prove favourable. His horses attended him, and he purposed to ride through the Fen to Ely.

At Anchor.

July 18th-19th.—I had ordered the Fleet to weigh anchor at five from Whore's Nest, and rising at six, found we were advanced about two miles, and just entering into Whittlesey Dyke. Here we immediately anchored, and after breakfast, I ordered the Fleet to steer up the river Nene south-west, instead of going up Whittlesey Dyke, which is the common water passage by Whittlesey town to Peterborough. After we had advanced about a mile, we met with a bridge too low to admit our boats to pass, called Neigh-

hours Bridge. This obstacle was, however, soon removed, and the wooden part of the bridge raised by some bankers who happened to be at work near it. Two miles from hence we passed by Benwick, prettily situated on each side of the river, the grounds having a fertile appearance. In passing through a bridge in this village, which necessarily occasioned some delay, the people assembled as usual to see us pass. A number of children, crossing together near a neighbouring cottage (a school), added to the simplicity of the scene, which had much the appearance of some of the best Flemish landscapes. From Benwick we advanced three miles, leaving Ramsey more on the south, and anchored near a fisherman's house, at a place called Bodsey Gravel, where we purchased some silver eels, and, flinging the casting net for bait, caught three perch. Advancing up the river one mile to a place called Cuckolds Haven, we met with a considerable obstacle—a strong wooden bridge too low for our Fleet to pass. From hence, while we dined, I despatched two ambassadors to Ramsey, about a mile south, to desire leave of the proprietor to raise the wooden part, as also of another bridge, which I was informed was about two miles higher up the river, called Heron's Bridge. Just as we had dined, Mr. Reynolds, a gentleman formerly in the army,

arrived from the widow, Mrs. Eseaux, with her consent to raise Heron's Bridge, provided it should be immediately repaired again, which having promised, and the carpenters arriving with jacks and proper engines, in about half an hour this bridge was raised, and in the same time Heron's Bridge. From hence, the ground not permitting the Hippopotamus to tow the Fleet, we were obliged to put against the stream (which, however, was not strong) and wind, about two miles to Palmer's Bridge, which, though lower and stronger than the other bridges, was obliged to yield to us a passage, by the assistance of our carpenter, John Marrin. Here, it being just sun-down, I ordered our Fleet to anchor, and to proceed at five in the morning up the river, and the carpenters to attend us in their yawl to remove some other obstacles which we were to meet with betwixt Whittlsey Meer and Peterborough. The wind, as the day preceding, west; cloudy, though pleasant, weather, without rain. The crops of hay large in cock. The ground north of the river, from Benwick to Ramsey, there the best I had seen. Large bullocks fattening in the pastures, and plenty of corn. The sex still plain, but not hideous, as yesterday.

On Board the Fleet in Bedford New Cut.

July 19th-20th.—I got out of my cabin at six, and found the Fleet advanced about a mile up the river, and was then at the entrance of Whittlesey Meer, the wind having changed in the night to south. I ordered the Fleet to steer close to the southern shore, that we might by this means have a fair run over the Meer to Fasset Dyke. Having proceeded about a mile, we anchored in a rushy bay, and breakfasted. At the same time, I ordered the sails of the *Pristis*, *Centaurus*, and *Chimera* to be set, and appointed a mariner to each vessel to manage the sails, under the direction of Mr. Roberts, who steered the *Centaurus*, and of Mr. Farrington, who steered the *Chimera*. I undertook the management of the *Pristis*. The distance from this bay to Fasset Dyke is about two miles. The wind was on the beams. The visitors' prize was the first choice of three riband cockades.

Undi ubi Clara dedit sonitum Tubafinibus omnes,
Hand mora Prosiluere Iuis.

The wind blew fresh, and the *Pristis* took the lead, beating the other two near half a mile. The *Centaurus*, by a mistake of her pilot bearing to the port in too straight a line, was blown to the leeward of the dyke, and struck amongst the

reeds. Then the captain of the Chimera, avoiding by being behind the fate of the Centaurus, steered to windward, and came into the port second. From hence, being joined by the rest of the Fleet, we towed, and sailed through a narrow cut, amidst high reeds, called Fasset Dyke, or the Old Nene, to the village of the same name, where, having passed through three bridges, which were luckily just the height of our upper work, we dismissed our carpenters; and sailing along a narrow river, through corn and hay fields, we arrived at Standground Sluice at four o'clock, having viewed on the eastern shore a Roman or Danish fortification near a farm called Horsey. We passed the sluice, two boats at a time, in five minutes each, and entered Morton Leam, made by a bishop of Ely of that name in the reign of James the First, which forms the communication by water between Peterborough and Wisbech. We weighed anchor during dinner; and, proceeding about a mile up the Nene, turned into the New Cut, and anchored at a bridge about half a mile from the race ground. We had no sooner got on a high bank, but the horses started; for the event of the race I refer you to the Sporting Calendar, as I mean only to treat of nautical matters. Here we determined to remain until morning.

We had been assured before we set out on this expedition, that we should be plagued with gnats. Experience has proved that there are fewer of those insects on board than on shore.

Weather pleasant, with frequent showers.

NEW BEDFORD CUT, *July 20th-21st.*—On rising this morning at six o'clock, I found we were at anchor near Peterborough Bridge, opposite the Cathedral and Bishop's Palace; the latter hath not a grand appearance. About nine, Mr. Image, a clergyman, chaplain to the late Bishop, came on board with very polite offers of service. About ten I received a card from the Bishop inviting us to dinner, either on Thursday or Friday. The nature of my engagements prevented me from accepting his obliging invitation. About one, the Dean of Peterborough came on board, and gave me hopes of seeing him again in Whittlesey Meer. I ordered higher masts and longer bowsprits to be made for the Centaurus and Chimera, and am in hopes this will occasion a considerable improvement in their sailing. I bought a skiff, Thames built, of Mr. Serice, of Peterborough: she rows and sails well. At two o'clock, having completed our provision, we weighed anchor again about a mile higher than yesterday, from whence we had a better view of

the race. Mr. Roberts, Mr. Farrington, and Mrs. Turk went to see Peterborough Church and town in the morning, and the two former went in the evening to the concert.

WHITTLESEY MEER, *July 22nd.*—Weighing our anchors from the New Bedford Cut, we arrived at Standground Sluice at seven in the morning. After breakfast, the Fleet passed, one boat at a time, into the Old Nene through the sluice in about three-quarters of an hour. During this operation we landed, and walked in a pleasant garden, filled with carnations, now in full bloom, belonging to Sir John East, as also the fishery up the river Nene into Whittlesey Meer, and that part of the Meer which lays on the north and eastern shores. We passed again by Hersey Bridge (mentioned in a former journal), from whence to the Nene the river is contracted to a twelve-foot cut. We again passed the village of Fasset, and were again admired by men, women, and children. The very bullocks at feed in the meadows galloped after us a considerable way, and Charlotte declared she saw a cat creeping towards the river to take a peep at us. We entered into the Meer at two o'clock, with a gentle breeze at north west, and sailing about a quarter of a mile into it, cast

anchor. During dinner, a boat filled with company rowed round us, after which they returned on board their sloop about two miles to the leeward. I sent the fisherman, with Long Robin, to set two dozen of trimmers. After dinner, we sailed in the Chimera, Pristis, and Swallow, to reconnoitre the sloop. In sailing, the Pristis beat her and the rest, as usual. About eight we examined the trimmers, and took a large perch, and one of middling size, and a small pike. Here I determined to continue at anchor for the evening at least; and as we purpose to return in a few days to Peterborough, we shall probably continue in the same position, as we can command the mouth of the Old Nene with almost any wind.

Weather fine, the sun set bright.

FASSET BAY, IN WHITTLESEY MEER, *July 23rd.*—At seven in the morning we went with the tenders, took up the trimmers, and caught several perch and pike. About twelve I attempted, in the Pristis, to examine the southern shore of the Meer towards Connington, but the wind blowing from the south, prevented me from executing my design; I therefore hauled up to the western shore, and fished under the lee of a rush bed, and caught two perch of a middling size. Mr. Farrington, in the Chimera,

caught four perch. About twelve, the *Centaurus* arrived from Peterborough, with her new bowsprit and mast, though without any additional canvas, the sailmaker having attended the candidates who are now taking interest against the next general election at Peterborough, and with such quantities of Lethean ale that he had forgotten to execute my orders, and his own promise to fulfil them. However, by the addition of a new rudder, she sails much better than before these alterations were made. The man who piloted the *Centaurus* brought fruit and two haunches of venison, and returned with the *Pristis* to complete her in the same manner as the *Centaurus*. Mr. Duggin arrived just before dinner. In the afternoon we again took more fish on the trimmers than in the morning. Mr. Roberts, who had set out in the morning on foot from the shore and walked to Stilton, about six miles, arrived in the evening, bringing a compass sent to me from town, a Stilton cheese, and a letter from Lord Sandwich, acquainting me he would meet us in his new yacht on the Meer on Monday next.

Fine, sunshine, with light breeze from the south-west.

FASSET BAY, *July 24th.*—The morning was fine. The wind changing to west,

made it practicable for me to examine the southern shore of the Meer. About eight we sailed in the Centaurus to take up the trimmers, and found she would not keep well to windward, in spite of the alteration which had been made in her rigging. We had not much success, and caught but few fish. I pointed the Centaurus back to the Fleet; and, taking the Swallow, rowed along the western shore of the Meer, to that part which joins by a cut to Trundle Meer, toward Yaxley. From hence we sailed to Holm Lode, and then steered across the Meer, about three miles, back to the Fleet. Whilst at dinner, several boats, filled with both sexes, sailed round us; amongst the rest Lord Sandwich's new yacht, which made a handsome appearance, and seems to sail well. After dinner, we again took up the trimmers, and caught a great number of very fine pike and some perch.

One of the boats, which had sailed near the place where our trimmers were set, cut three of our lines with fish, and carried them off. Mrs. Turk, who had been with me in the Swallow in the morning, went on shore to take a walk. In the afternoon I angled, but the weather being so calm *ut placidum ventis statat Meer*, I had no sport. I observed this afternoon for the first time on this Meer a prodigious flight of martins

skimming along its surface, and resting on the sedge and reeds. As they do not build but in sandy holes, I imagined they stopt here accidentally on their passage to some distant country.

A small snake, with a golden ring round his neck, came out of the Meer, and somehow crept into the Centaurus: we took him gently out, and returned him into the lake.

FASSET BAY, *July 25th.*—In the morning, at eight, I perceived Lord Sandwich's yacht at the southernmost part of the Meer. She tacked several times, and endeavoured to make up to us; but, the wind being light and contrary, blowing from the north, she was obliged to desist. About nine, after breakfast, I went in the Swallow to see the trimmers taken up, which had took several perch, pike, and eels. The wind freshening, the yacht reached us, and I sailed to meet her. After the accustomed salutations of friends, his lordship came on board our Fleet, attended by Captains Hotham and Welsingham. After breakfast, we attended the yacht to the southern coast of the Meer. I went in the *Pristis*, which had just returned with provision from Peterborough. Mrs. Turk went in the Swallow; Mr. Farrington in the *Chimera*. Mr. Roberts chose

to go on board Lord Sandwich's yacht, called the Whittlesey. The wind falling, we made little way. However, the *Pristis*, without her foresail, which was left at Peterborough to be enlarged, out-sailed the whole Fleet. We had great success with Lord Sandwich's trimmers, set in the southern part of the Meer, taking near twenty large perch, one of which weighed near two pounds, and several pike; had in the morning taken as many: these were immediately sent on board a boat, with a wooden tilt, which lay on a rush bed near the Holm Cut. About two we all dined with his lordship, and agreed we never had tasted better fish; and it must be here remembered that the southern coast of the Meer produces the largest and fattest perch and pike; though the northern is most productive of excellent eels. After about two hours spent in festive enjoyments of the table, and singing several catches, &c. we again sailed to take up Lord Sandwich's trimmers.

The *Pristis* being sent back to the Fleet, to be returned immediately to Peterborough for a thorough refitting, I went with Mr. Farrington in the *Chimera*. The wind was high and contrary, which obliged us to make long tacks in order to work up the Meer to the Fleet. The Whittlesey yacht outstripped us all, the *Chimera* being high out of the water, and shaped like the

shell of a walnut, made so much leeward that after boarding several times near three miles each tack, and not gaining above a quarter of a mile each, I determined to take her sails down to row to the Fleet, which, with some difficulty we effected in about three hours from the time we sailed from the Holm Cut.

After taking up our own trimmers, and catching several fish, we returned to the Fleet after sun set, much amused, though tired, with the day's diversion.

FASSET'S BAY, *July 26th*.—Early in the morning the wind veered to south-west, and blowing hard, the Fleet being anchored at the headmost and sternmost boat, and the small tenders alongside knocking against the larger, alarmed part of the crew, who imagined we were driven from our anchors, and were striking against some hidden rock. Messrs. Roberts and Farrington turned out; Mrs. Turk likewise took a peep out of the cabin window: when, perceiving we were all in *statu quo*, they again betook themselves to rest. Charlotte and the cook were both frightened and sea sick, and sat up the rest of the night. About nine it was quite calm, and the water as smooth as a looking glass. I went to take up the trimmers; caught only two perch and an eel, the eels having eaten

off the rest of our baits. Perceiving the the Whittlesey, with Lord Sandwich, entering the Meer, and a light breeze from the north-east springing up, I set the Centaurus's main-sail and two jibsails. Mr. Farrington immediately hoisted the Chimera's sails, and we had a run to the Whittlesey, about three miles. At first the Chimera, being to windward, got more of the breeze, and run from us near a quarter of a mile ahead. The wind afterwards being equally serviceable to the Centaurus, we came up with the Chimera, and passed her a hundred yards to a point of land, or rather a bed of rushes, on the south-east shore, when we anchored under the wind, and angled about an hour. We had several bites, but caught no fish, our worms being too small. At this point the Whittlesey sailed by us, with Captain Hotham and Mr. Bates on board. Lord Sandwich was taking up the trimmers in the longboat: he caught near twenty large pike and perch, which were sent to the Fleet, and prepared for dinner. The wind blowing very fresh, we all sailed back to the Fleet. The Whittlesey seemed to me not to sail so well as the day before: she went up the Fasset Cut, or Old Nene, about a quarter of a mile from our anchoring place in Fasset Bay, where, her bottom being examined, several loads of weeds, which had retarded her speed, were

cut off from her rudder and bottom. Half after two, Lord Sandwich, Captains Sir Richard Blackerton, Hotham, and Wellingham came and dined on board the Fleet. About three a most violent storm of lightning and rain came on, the wind blowing very hard from the north-west. At five the rain ceased, though the wind continued. His lordship and his friends took leave, with three cheers, and sailed to the southward. I got into the Centaurus, and sailed to the east to take up the trimmers. Our mast having been heightened, and a second jibsail being added, made her take in a good deal of water. I, therefore, got on board the Swallow, which had followed us, and returned to the Fleet at seven o'clock. We had taken two pike, an eel, and two perch.

The morning was sultry, the hottest we had felt since our departure from Martin's Straits.

*On Board the Fleet, at anchor one mile west
of Peterborough, in the river Nene.*

July 27th.—At eight in the morning, I ordered the Swallow and Chimera to bend their sails, the wind blowing hard from the north-west. At nine I went in the Swallow, and Mr. Farrington in the Chimera, to take up the trimmers; and ordered the Fleet immediately to

weigh anchor, and to proceed up the Fasset Cut to the village of that name, and, when it had passed the three bridges, to anchor till we joined it. We caught two pike, two perch, and an eel. After having in vain endeavoured to get into the Fasset Cut by making long tacks, I ordered the sail to be furled; and though Sam rowed lustily, it was with great difficulty that we got into the Fasset Cut in about two hours. Here Long Robin came on board the Swallow from the fisherman's boat: he took the hauling line, and was of great use in towing us part of the way to Fasset, the cut being almost choked up with weeds. The pastures on each side are exceedingly rich, and feed numbers of large cattle, and produce large quantities of hay, which is likely to suffer by the wet season. Willows are planted in regular rows, which separate each field. About twelve we joined the Fleet. About one the Chimera, which we had left in the Meer struggling against the wind, joined us. We immediately sailed and towed, the wind being now favourable, leaving many of the ragged inhabitants of the village on the bank of the river. We proceeded about two miles up the Cut, and dined a little above Horsey Bridge. I gathered out of the water the water lily, the water eyebright, and a small three-leaved flower, white, with a yellow eye,

which resembles in smell the marvel of Peru. I likewise saw a large zebra spider on the water. About four we sailed again, and gathered carnations in Standground Toll-house Garden, whilst the boats were passing through the sluices into Morton's Leam. The level of the water in the Old Nene is six feet lower than the water in the Leam. We sailed again immediately, and, passing through Peterborough Bridge, we anchored at Barnard's Reach, about a mile west of the town, from whence we had a fine view of the west side of Peterborough Cathedral. On the north shore is a meadow, in which a man was milking, who supplied us with a sufficient quantity for the whole Fleet. We went and walked in the meadow, and I permitted the whole ship's company to stretch their legs, which, after so long confinement on board, they were happy to do. Sir Robert Barnard's house is situated on a rising ground at the end of the meadow. Mr. Roberts walked into it, and found that the ground was prettily laid out, but of small extent.

Casualties :—Sam, in passing at Fasset Bridge from one boat to another, fell into the water, over head and ears ; but was luckily taken out without any hurt, though much frightened. The carpenter who attended the Fleet to this place the first time it passed this way met with the same accident.

*On Board the Fleet, in the River Nene,
near Peterborough.*

July 28th.—About nine in the morning, I sailed in the Pritis, which had gotten her new mast, bowsprit, and rudder, to Peterborough. The wind was steady, and she sailed extremely well, beating the Chimera, in which were Mr. Farrington, Mr. Roberts, and Mrs. Turk, near a quarter of a mile. I ordered some new canvas to be added to the mainsail and foresail, and Long Robin to get two dozen of trimmers. I sent Mr. Image a very fine perch and an eel, caught in a casting net the night before. I ought to have mentioned that it rained and blew very hard, though, being under shelter of some trees, we did not feel any motion or rolling of the vessels. At eleven o'clock, I set out in a post-chaise and pair, with Mrs. Turk, for Spalding races: Mr. Farrington and Mr. Roberts followed in another. Between Peterborough and Deeping are open fields, part fallowed; the rest produces great crops of beans, with some wheat and barley middling. On the left, embosomed in a tuft of trees, rises the neat, though low, gothic spire of Paston. Warrington steeple is more lofty. There are no fallows, but all kinds of grain—a plentiful crop, mixed with slips of meadow. At Ghinton are the remains of a

remarkable building—I suppose a monastery—converted into a farm-barn and farm-house. To Deeping, the same sort of well-cultivated country, rather more inclosed, we passed over a meadow of some hundred acres. Hay a good crop, all in cock, which had a delightful appearance and smell on a causeway over four wooden bridges. The houses in this part are generally built of stone, which lays in strata within two inches of the surface. The earth which covers it is of a reddish-brown colour. From Deeping, having attempted in vain to get fresh horses, we set out at half after twelve. About a mile hence, we got again into what is called the Turnpike-road, and passed over Deeping Common, an extensive plain covered with thistles, feeding quantities of cattle and sheep, without horns, and large flocks of geese. The inhuman custom of plucking the latter for their down prevails, and had just been put into execution, their feathers being mostly bloody, and we found many dead near the road in consequence of this operation. From Littleton Turnpike, six miles from Spalding and ninety-four from London, we entered the droveway of that name. On the left is a rush and sedge fen, which, however, in part affords food for cattle. On the west side were great crops of oats quite to Spalding Common. Three or four wretched farm-houses, and a miserable

ale-house, were the only buildings on this dreary country. The Lincolnshire Hills, covered with wood, stretched about ten miles distance on the west; and the ruins of Crowland Abbey, placed on a rising ground amidst groves of trees, added to the melancholy prospect on the east. Passing over a bridge, we got on Spalding Common, which is at this time exceedingly wet, the cattle feeding up to their bellies in water. We entered (on a causeway, near the bank of a small navigable river), the town of Spalding, which is tolerably well built of stone, and dined at the White Hart, in the Market-place, which is spacious and surrounded with good shops. Though the dinner at the ordinary was then served up, our table was quickly and plentifully supplied. About five, we set out, with Mr. Duggin, for the race ground. The neighbouring farmers' wives and daughters were on horseback, well dressed, and much handsomer than any we have yet seen since our departure from Martin's Straits. After the race, we returned by St. James, Deeping, a well-built village—the lands exceedingly rich and well cultivated—and arrived at Peterborough about ten o'clock, having performed this journey, forty miles, with the same pair of horses.

Imagining we might go in the chaise to the waterside, where the Fleet was anchored, I

ordered the boats from Peterborough Bridge to join the Fleet, and continued our journey in the chaise to Sir Robert Barnard's Park pale, from whence we attempted to walk to the boats. Crossing a foot bridge, Mr. Farrington, handing Mrs. Turk, slipt into the water. We, however, all got on board, much draggled, about half after ten.

P.S.—No turnips between Peterborough and Spalding. I observed, in going to Deeping, a man in a one-horse chaise, with large warts round his eyelids, much resembling a carrier pigeon.

*On Board the Fleet, River Nene, near
Peterborough.*

July 29th.—In the morning, at eight, the wind blowing hard, with squalls of rain from the south-west, I ordered Long Robin to set a dozen trimmers on the south side of the river. At ten, sailed in the Swallow to Peterborough Bridge, in order to give some directions to the boatwright and sailmaker. Returning back to the Fleet, I angled, and caught five small perch and a pike. At half after two, I sailed again in the *Pristis*, with her old mast, her new sails not being finished, in nine minutes and a half, to Peterborough Bridge, about two miles and a half

from the Fleet. Being joined in the town by Mr. Roberts, who had walked thither in the morning, we went with Mr. Farrington to the Palace, where we were very politely received by the Bishop and his lady, and most elegantly entertained at dinner with a variety of genuine wines: the Burgundy, of the Chambertin growth, was the best I had tasted in England for many years. Our company, besides those already mentioned, were the bishop's sister, the dean, and his lordship's chaplain, Mr. Bacchus, whose figure and jovial turn was well adapted to his name. After dinner, we had the pleasure of seeing his lordship's young family, consisting of three fine children. The Bishop showed me in his garden a new kind of wheat from Barbary, which he had raised from six grains sent him by the Dean of Gloucester; from each proceeded about twenty stems, containing above a hundred grains in each; they were much higher and stronger than the common wheat, and the stems solid: the ears branched out in four or five parts. I have no doubt but this wheat, when increased for common use, will be a great improvement in husbandry. His lordship imagines, with reason, that it is the sort of corn described by Pliny, the naturalist, and called by him *seges ramosa*.

About seven, the ladies went to the play, also

Mr. Roberts and Mr. Farrington ; when, taking leave of this worthy prelate, with thanks for his hospitable reception, I returned to the Fleet at eight o'clock, and found that Long Robin had caught five eels and three pike with the trimmers.

Casualties :—Mr. Roberts broke his shin in handing a lady over a bench in the play-house.

SANDWICH POINT, IN WHITTLESEY MEER, *July 30th.*—The Fleet weighed anchor at five in the morning from Barnard's Beach, in the river Nene, and, passing with a fair wind through Peterborough Bridge, anchored at seven at Standground Sluice, when I got out of my cabin, and gathered carnations again in the Toll-house garden. In three quarters of an hour we set sail, having passed through the sluice into the Old Nene, and stopped at Horsey Bridge, where we went on shore, and examined the old fortification, which is square, containing about two acres of ground, the mound about eight feet in height, without a ditch. At the corners of this rampart the ground is raised still higher, in the shape of a bastion. The turnpike man informed us that there was a tradition that this spot was occupied by Cromwell's troops in the time of the civil wars, who might possibly have added the bastions. Here we breakfasted,

and proceeded down the old river Nene. Just at the entrance Jarvis overtook us on horseback with venison and fruit from Houghton.* Having an intention of crossing the Meer in a day or two, and to proceed to Ramsey Meer, I ordered the boats to be punted against the wind along the north-western shore about a mile, when we anchored at a point of land which forms one side of Fasset Bay, which I named Sandwich Point, in honour of his lordship. We had ordered the fisherman, Arnold, to set the trimmers in the morning: we went immediately and took them up, and caught three perch. The *Pristis*, with her new masts and sail, outstripped the rest. After dinner, I went in the *Pristis* to the southern shore of the Meer, attended by the *Swallow*, and angled, without success, for two hours. Mr. Farrington angled near the western shore in the *Chimera*, but caught nothing. However, the trimmers succeeded much better, Long Robin having taken up several perch and jacks: one of the former weighed a pound and a half. About eight we returned to the Fleet at Sandwich Point. The wind blew fresh the whole day from the west.

P.S.—Having mentioned so often trimmers, it may be necessary to observe that they are stakes set at about twenty yards from each other, to

* Lord Orford's seat in Norfolk.

which is tied a line about ten yards long, with a float; on the hook is a live bait; part of the line is wound round a crooked stick, which unwinds when the fish is taken on the slightest pull. A gang of barges passing Standground Sluice at the same time with the Fleet, some of the barge-men stole some salted jacks out of the Coconut, and got off with their booty unobserved.

SANDWICH POINT, *July 31st.*—At seven in the morning, I sailed in the *Pristis*, and Mr. Roberts in the *Swallow*—John directed the *Chimera*, Mr. Farrington not being up—to take up the trimmers. The wind blew fresh and fair. The *Swallow*, having the *Chimera's* sail, which was supplied by the sail of the *Centaurus* (condemned unfit for sailing), rather beat the *Pristis*, and the *Chimera*, spreading now more canvas, came pretty near. We caught several perch and pike; amongst the rest, one perch near seventeen inches long, which I sent by Jarvis as a present to a friend at Lynn. When the trimmers were taken up, we attempted to ply to windward to regain the Fleet. Here the *Pristis* clearly beat the rest; yet, after tacking several miles backwards and forwards, the wind constantly failing or shifting near Sandwich Point, occasioned, I imagined, by the height of the reeds, I was at length forced to take down

the sails about one hundred yards to the leeward of the Fleet. The Swallow and Chimera, being near a mile to leeward, took to their oars, and joined the Fleet. After breakfast, Mr. Farrington (in the absence of the Rev. Messrs. Barnes and Case, appointed chaplains to the Fleet, but unfortunately prevented by illness from making this voyage,) read a most excellent sermon, "No man liveth to himself," by the late ingenious Mr. Sterne, with a most audible and clerical voice. We then attempted to angle, without success. At dinner we were attended by five or six boats filled with people from the villages bordering on the Meer, who sailed and rowed in circles round the Fleet. After dinner, I sailed in the Swallow, and Mr. Farrington in the Chimera, along the western shore into Trundle Meer, which is joined by a twenty-foot drain to Whittlesey Meer, and consists of about one hundred acres, but is so overgrown with weeds that it must be barren of fish, and indeed it was with some difficulty that we could navigate through it. Returning, angled from hence into Whittlesey Meer, and caught one perch: the air was perfectly calm, which, I imagined, prevented our sport. At sunset we joined the Fleet. The few clouds to the west at a great distance were tinged with a beautiful pink colour, edged with silver: Claude Lorraine hath

alone succeeded in imitating these roseate tints. We saw this afternoon three young gossanters swimming on the smooth surface of the lake, and two curlews, with hooked bills, flew across it.

SANDWICH POINT, *August 1st.*—I sailed in the *Pristis* at seven in the morning to take up the trimmers. The wind being ahead, and her foresail too large and hanging, flung her so much to leeward that she was beat by the *Chimera*, directed by Mr. Farrington; and Sam, in the *Swallow*, came in second. When the trimmers were taken up, several perch, pike, and eels were caught. In sailing back to the Fleet before the wind, the *Swallow* came in first, the *Pristis* second, and the *Chimera* last. After breakfast, I ordered Long Robin and Harry to go in the *Centaurus* to Holm rivulet to catch baits; and, intending to set our trimmers this afternoon near the southern shore of the Meer, I ordered Sam to tell Gosling, the fisherman who rents this part of the Meer, to attend. After breakfast, I went in the *Pristis*, with Mrs. Turk, to examine Holm rivulet and village; and Mr. Farrington, in the *Chimera*, followed us.

Comesque erat aura secunda,
Per placidum cursu pelagus nereides undis
Signa dabant, pars inflexis subit acta carinis.

After sailing up Holm Cut about two miles, and taking a view of the village, which stands on a rising ground, we returned to the entrance into the lake. But during this short interval its surface was totally changed.

Nam seu celesti fato seu sideris ortu
 Undique mutatur coli nitor, omnia ventis
 Omnia turbinibus sunt auxia, jam maris undæ
 Sideribus certant consurgere, jamque superne
 Corruere.

In this situation we remained waiting for the Chimera, as I was determined that Mrs. Turk, for greater safety, should go on board the Chimera. About a quarter of an hour after our arrival at the entrance into the Meer, we perceived that the bumketch, Fireaway, had broke loose from her mooring, and, being covered with a canvas, was sailing over the waves across the lake. Five minutes afterwards, we perceived the Swallow was rowing after her. About a mile from the Fleet she overtook her, and we perceived she had taken her in tow, and was rowing to reach the western shore, though much to leeward of the Fleet. Mr. Farrington having joined us with the Chimera and Centaurus (condemned yesterday), and the first fury of the storm being abated, though it still blew very hard, I determined to endeavour to join the Fleet. Mrs. Turk went on board the Chimera, taking the helm; Mr. Farrington

and John the Falconer rowed ; I took Harry and Sam to punt the *Pristis*, and left Will to manage the *Centaurus*. The wind being directly against us, we kept close to the southern shore, and, with great difficulty steering west, got into the Yaxley Cut. From this place the shore trends to the north ; so that, being under the lee of some high rushes, we found smoother water here. I hoisted the *Pristis*'s mainsail ; and after several tacks, in which she sailed quite steady though the foaming billows, I gained the Fleet, to the great joy of Mr. Roberts, who, being left alone (Frank and the boy* having rowed the *Swallow* after the *bumketch*), had held a council with Charlotte and the cook on the present exigency of affairs ; and they had determined, in case the anchors gave way, to retreat into the *Cocoa Nut* (victualler), and, cutting the rope to disengage her from the rest, to endeavour by this means to save themselves from the watery deep, all judging her in that case to be the safest vessel. In sailing up to the Fleet, I saw a sail to the windward, which proved to be Mr. Parsons in the *Cooper*, who had promised to meet us in the Meer. I desired him and his company to do me the favour to dine on board, which they readily complied with, and, joining provisions and liquors, made

*What boy ? for Will was left to manage the *Centaurus*.

out an excellent dinner, our cabin just containing the number twelve. After dinner, the wind still blowing hard, we had great sport with the trimmers, catching several large pike, perch, and eels, which the company in the Cooper carried to Yaxley, where they purposed to sup. We then took up the trimmers, and set them near the southern shore ; after which we parted from the Cooper, which steered to Yaxley, and I returned to the Fleet in the Pristis. About seven o'clock the rain abated, and the sun set very bright.

On Board the Fleet at Anchor in Ramsey Meer.

August 2nd.—I was much pleased to find that the wind in the night had chopped about to the north-west, which being fair for our passage over the Meer, I ordered the sail of the Whale to be ready to be set at a moment's notice ; and perceiving at six o'clock a sail to the south, I immediately hoisted mine on board the Pristis, and ordered the Fleet to weigh anchor, and to anchor again in a bay near the entrance into the river Nene, towards Ramsey, which was named Orford Bay. Mr. Farrington went with me, and we soon joined the Cooper from Yaxley, and took up the trimmers, but caught only two small perch and two jacks, a foot in length,

which we left on the hooks for baits. We perceived the Whale, with the line of boats, sailing steadily over the Meer; when, with Mr. Parsons and company, we joined it at anchor in Orford Bay, about two hundred yards from the place where the lake discharges itself into the river Nene. After breakfast, though it was almost calm, we had better sport with the trimmers; being baited this morning with live baits, we caught two large perch, two small ones, and five middling pike. Whilst taking up the trimmers, we were joined by the rest of the company from Yaxley, and punted across the Meer to Orford Bay. The weather was calm, and very hot. At the entrance into the Meer, we found a Ramsey boat, filled with lads and lasses fishing, which had just returned from Stilton feast, where they had been frolicking two or three days. On these occasions, which happen only once a year, the village treats everybody, both neighbours and strangers, as long as there is any liquor or victuals in it. Dancing and country gambols are continued during this festival. The Cooper was towed from hence down the river, our boat being fastened to her. We joined the Fleet at Heron's Bridge (mentioned in a former journal), and found the carpenters busily employed in raising it to a proper height for the passage of our boats. A

crowd was assembled near it, and proved the truth of a remark current through this country, that the Ramsey people are famous for long teeth and hair. After passing through Horn Bridge, near Cuckold's Horn, raised in the same manner, we anchored, and dined at Bodsey Gravel most deliciously, on the fish taken in the Meer, salted jacks, and venison, the gentlemen belonging to the Cooper again favouring us with their company. After dinner, we proceeded about a mile, and then turned through a winding cut into Ramsey Meer, where we anchored. There the Cooper took leave of us, and sailed for Ramsey.

P.S.—I shall in this place give a brief description of Whittlesey Meer, where we have passed so much of our time. Its true name is Whitesea, from the white hue of the water. Its whole circumference, taking in the rush and red fen which fringes its banks, and which extends to the hard lands of the villages of Yaxley, Fasset, Holm, and Conington, is computed at twenty-four miles. The crater, which is free from rushes, is four miles in length and about two or three in breadth. The bottom is silty; its depth from five to seven feet. The south-eastern parts of the Meer, about Orford Bay, is totally free from weeds, of a kind which grow in the Thames near Windsor; but in the

whole Meer a bed of weeds is not to be found, which I attribute to the constant agitation of the water, which having no hills near it, is exposed to, and ruffled by the wind from whatever corner it blows; it will be found from these journals that it abound in fish. The best station for those who intend to stay on this Meer is near Sandwich Point, as from this anchorage you can in any weather keep up a communication with one of the bordering villages. This lake is esteemed the largest (a lake in Lancashire excepted) in South Britain.

RAMSEY RIVER, *August 3rd.*—In the morning at six, I got out of my cabin and had a view of our situation, which was nearly in the centre of Ramsey Meer, which appeared to be perfectly round; and about a mile in diameter. I went immediately in the *Pristis* with Mr. Roberts, and took up the trimmers which had been set the night before. We caught seven large silver eels weighing near three pounds each, four perch, and a large pike, and had only fifteen trimmers set. This Meer is about four feet deep in every part, with a hard bottom, and few or no weeds. We saw three people fishing, under the lee of a small island, in the middle of the Meer, which I

called Turk's Island after Mrs. Turk. As soon as we returned on board, I ordered the anchor to be weighed, and we punted the Fleet through a cut amidst high reeds, about half a mile in length, which I named Roberts' Straits, into the river Nene from whence Hippopotamus towed it to Ramsey, about three miles. We anchored near the town, and after breakfast walked to see the ruins of the Abbey. We found the sex much handsomer, and the town better situated and built than any other we had seen in the Fens. The girls had many of them guido faces, with fair hair and good shapes, with expression, and life in their countenances : this we attributed to the mixture of French refugee blood settled here in the last century. A post chaise having been ordered from Huntingdon, I got into it with Mr. Farrington at eleven o'clock, leaving the command of the Fleet to Mrs. Turk. The ground to the south rises with a gentle ascent; the fields are well cultivated; and several small woods added to the beauty of the scene. On the left, about two miles from Ramsey, lies Bury, a small village; about four miles from hence, passing through an open field covered with beans, we arrived at King's Ripton, from hence to Harford. The country has been lately enclosed with a double ditch, posted, and railed. Quick is planted, which, in

many places, is thriving. We saw a turnip field for the first time. These farms seemed to be cultivated in the Norfolk method of husbandry. We arrived about two at Huntingdon, and dined at a very full ordinary, with Lord Sandwich, Duke of Manchester, &c. After the race of hacks (there not being horses to run for the plate) I returned by Warboys (a much better road) to Ramsey, and got on board the Fleet at nine o'clock; the wind south-west the whole day, the sun set without a cloud.

We parted with Mr. Parsons in the morning, in the Cooper, steering to Ugg-Meer. The environs of Ramsey abound in excellent garden stuff. Charlotte bought a cabbage for three half-pence, which weighed fifteen pounds.

RAMSEY MEER, *August 4th.*—At seven in the morning Hippopotamus towed us down the Ramsey river into the Nene about a mile, and from thence down the Nene to Bodsey Gravel, where we anchored. Before breakfast I walked with Mrs. Turk and Mr. Farrington to a farm house, about a quarter of a mile from our anchoring place. It belongs to Mr. Fellows, who is the proprietor of Ramsey and Ugg Meers, and a very considerable estate in this neighbourhood. The ground round this house is very dry, the soil being gravelly. The enclosures are quick-

set, and very thick. There is a footpath through the fields to Ramsey. I named these fields Magpie Fields, from the great attendance of those birds seen there. We returned, and breakfasted on board, and rowed immediately to Roberts' Straights, when, leaving Hippopotamus to graze in a neighbouring meadow, we punted the Fleet through the Straights into the Meer, and anchored in the middle of it. I went immediately to take up the trimmers set by Long Robin the night before. The wind blowing hard from the east, our sport was not equal to our expectations, owing, I imagine, to the change of the wind to a point unfavourable to fishing. However, we took up two large eels, a small pike, and four perch. After this I sailed near two hours in the *Pristis*, whose foresail being lessened, sailed most admirably, and is, I believe, brought to her trim.

The *Chimera*, directed by Mr. Farrington, sailed tolerably well. We returned (after angling half an hour under Turk's Island, and catching six small perch) on board the Fleet. After dinner we again took up the trimmers; and caught one large pike. I immediately hoisted the *Pristis*' sails and steered to the northern shore to examine another inlet into the river Nene, which, though agreed to be our nearest passage, was represented by the fisher-

man as impracticable for our Fleet; however, on examination I found it wide enough, clear from weeds, and nearer by two miles to the point we were bound for: I called this inlet Farrington's Straits, and arriving on board the Fleet, ordered it to be punted under Turk's Island that we might be nearer to the mouth of this strait, which I purposed to pass through in the morning. The Chimera had sprang a leak, which had obliged her to return to the Fleet. Immediately after trimmers had been taken up, on returning to my cabin, I ordered the Fleet to weigh anchor at daybreak, and proceed with all expedition through Farrington's Streights down the river.

Mr. Roberts walked early in the morning to see a friend, about four miles from Ramsey, and is not yet returned. A boat was sent to wait for him at Bodsey Gravel.

Several boats, filled with both sexes, rowed round us, with angling rods in their hands, and afterwards passed under Turk's Island.

SALTERS' LOAD, *August 5th.*—From Ramsey Meer, passing through Farrington Straits into the river Nene; got out of my cabin at six; I found it was advanced as far as Benwick, it arrived at the Whittlesey Cut at eight, when we

anchored and breakfasted; the weather which had been rainy from sunrise, now cleared up. We passed through March at twelve, and examining the people separately, found we had no reason to alter our former opinion relative to that disagreeable arrangement of features called ugliness, entailed upon them. On enquiry our surprise ceased, when we were informed that this part of the country was settled by a colony of Dutch about the time of the Revolution, which accounted for the squat shape, flat nose, round unmeaning face which prevails amongst the inhabitants. Upwell, which may, in this respect, dispute the pre-eminence with March, was passed by us at two o'clock, when, finding Hippopotamus begin to drop, I ordered the anchor to be flung out. Before dinner I walked with Mrs. Turk and Mr. Farrington on the southern bank. Hemp was cut and stood in shocks, seeming a great crop. Barley, beans, and oats rather backward. A crop of wheat (considering the richness of the soil, perhaps the most fertile in England) but middling. After dinner, on perch, pike, and eels, all excellent in their kind, caught by the trimmers in Ramsey Meer this morning, we heaved anchor, and were towed by Hippopotamus through Outwell to Salter's Lode, where we arrived at six o'clock. The sluice gates being

shut, we shall be obliged to stay here till morning.

The boat sent from the Fleet waited till twelve for Mr. Roberts at Bodsey Gravel, and then returned without hearing anything of him. We conjecture he is gone to Cambridge, by Huntingdon.

MARTIN'S STREIGHTS, *August 6th, 1774.*

Jamque dies aderat cum nil procedere lintrem,
Sentimus.

I immediately got out of my cabin ; on enquiry found that a gang of barges which lay the night before in the Pool of the Sluice, having neglected taking the advantage of the high water to pass into the river Ouse, had about four been drawn over with difficulty the shallow water of the entrance into the river Ouse, after which the sluice gates shutting, had prevented the Fleet from proceeding on its voyage ; this being the fault of Harry, who acted as master, I ordered him to be immediately discharged, and set on shore. About ten the sluice doors were opened again ; when passing through Deuver Sluice we proceeded up the Ouse to the Creeks-end, whence steering eastward up the Little Ouse, four miles to

Mr. Burchs' Decoy-house, near which place we met with Mr. Barnes, dined at four o'clock. After dinner I sailed in the *Pristis*; and at Mrs. Stuart's Decoy-house had the pleasure of meeting her, Mrs. Hewer, and her maiden sister. They did me the honour to come on board, and sailed with us down . Martin's Streights to Lakenheath Bridge, where their coach waited to carry them to Mrs. Stuart's Villa. Our horses and chaises were also in waiting, and carried us to the cottage at Eriswell; having finished without accident this agreeable voyage in twenty-two days.

On our arrival at Eriswell we found Mr. Roberts, who, having in vain endeavoured to overtake the Fleet, had taken a post chaise at March, and arrived by Ely at Eriswell in the morning.

'Tis pity the gentlemen who have swan marks do not preserve the breed of that beautiful water fowl, which, in defiance of the Acts of Parliament made for its protection, is now almost destroyed in the Rivers of Nene and Ouse.

Our ship's company consisted of

Frank }
John } belonging to the family.
Sam }

Harry }
and } Watermen.
William }

Will, a boy who rode Hippopotamus.

Long Robin.

Charlotte.

The Cook.

*Memoranda furnished by J. M. Heathcote, Esq.
of Conington, near Stilton.*

1800.—Mr. Perry navigated a fast sailing cutter from the Broads of Norfolk into Whittlesey Mere.

He there became acquainted with Lord Sandwich, Mr. Heathcote, and in various directions they explored the Fen Rivers.

The summer was dry; and they remained so late in the season that the vessel called the *Bure* could not float out of the boat gates, or exits of Whittlesey Mere.

Mr. Perry then sold the yacht to Lord Sandwich and Mr. Heathcote jointly. Sailing parties were annually made, and on these occasions Sir Alured Clerke, Admiral Wells, and several other celebrated naval commanders have taken the helm, pulled up the trimmers, and assisted in crimping the fish according to the directions of Bamber Gascoigne.

It was not unusual to catch pike, 16lbs. and perch, 3 to 4lbs.

The motto over the tent (erected on the Reed Shoals for dinner) was

*Mere variety
Good cheer without inebriety.*

There are several circumstances worthy of record that took place at the early part of this century in the vicinity of Whittlesey Mere. A Fen man named Bury, worthy of credit, stated that he fired a large duck gun at a flock of snipes that were sitting on Blea Ground, and at one shot killed 36 dozen.

George Thornhill got into a boat out of the present library window at Conington Castle, and rowed off to the distant parts of Fen to shoot baldcoots.

Mr. Heathcote, in the course of one morning, killed $3\frac{1}{2}$ brace of bittern, and was immersed so deep in a quagmire, that his brother was obliged to go for assistance to liberate him.

1868.—On what was the Whittlesey Mere 40 tons of mangle wurzel can now be grown; and the soil produces the finest wheat in the country; and is perfectly inexhaustible, being 5 or 6 feet deep of alluvial soil.

The principal proprietor of the land which was the old meer, is Mr. Wells, of Holme.

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