

## THE DIORAMA,

REGENT'S PARK.

“ ————— The canvas smooth,  
With glowing life protuberant, to the view  
Embodied rose.”

THOMSON.

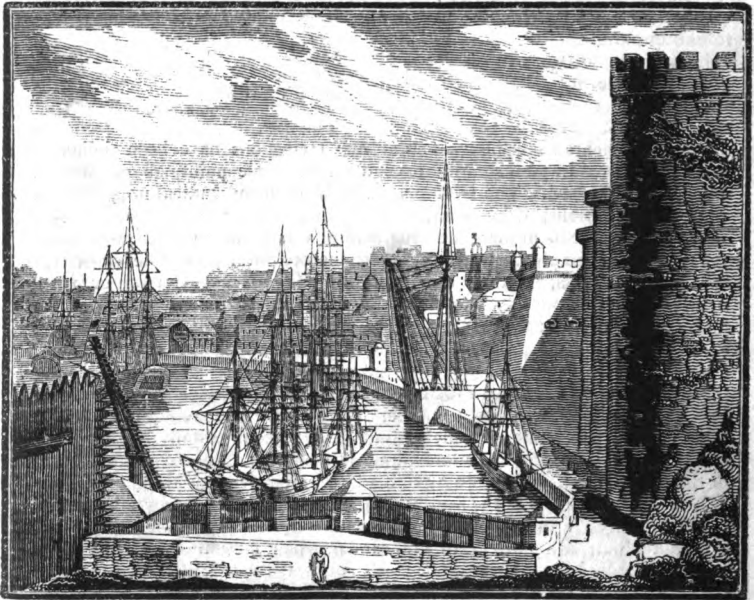
FOR several years past, the visitors of our metropolis have been delighted with the splendid and tastefully executed Panoramic paintings of Messrs. Barker and Burford. The Diorama is, however, a mechanical improvement on these exhibitions, which consists in placing the pictures on painted scenery, intended to form the exhibition, within a building so constructed, that the saloon or amphitheatre, containing the spectators, may be caused to revolve at intervals, for the purpose of bringing in succession two or more distinct scenes or pictures into view, and without the necessity of the spectators removing from their seats. From this arrangement of the revolving saloon, the scenery or pictures themselves remain stationary, and, therefore, admit of the application of the improved method of distributing or directing the daylight upon or through them, so as to produce the effects of varying the light and shade, by means of a number of coloured transparent and moveable blinds or curtains, some of which blinds are placed behind the picture or scenery, for the purpose of intercepting and changing the colour and shade of the rays of light, which are permitted to shine or pass through certain semi-transparent parts of the said picture or scenery, and thereby effect many curious changes in the appearance of the colour, in proportion as the said coloured blinds are moved up and down, which motion is performed in a particular order by certain lines or cords connected with suitable machinery. Others of these coloured transparent blinds or curtains are situated above and in front of the pictures or scenery, so as to be moveable by the aid of cords or lines as aforesaid, and by that means to distribute or direct the rays of light which are permitted to fall upon the face of the picture, at the same time that the rays of light, in passing through the coloured blinds, effect many surprising changes in the appearance of the colours of the painting or scenery, and thereby form this pleasing exhibition.

It will be seen that the Diorama differs from the Panorama in this respect, that instead of a circular view of the objects represented, it exhibits the whole picture at once in perspective, and is decidedly superior in the accuracy with which the objects are depicted, and in the completeness of the illusion.

This exhibition, after having long delighted and surprised the gay world at Paris, was first opened in London, Sept. 29th, 1823. The views first exhibited, were the *Interior of Canterbury Cathedral*, and a *picturesque view of the Valley of Sarnen, in Switzerland*.

In 1824, the views were changed to those of *Brest Harbour*, and *Chartres Cathedral*, and in March, 1825, *Holyrood Chapel* was substituted for *Brest Harbour*;—all which scenes are represented in the accompanying Engravings.

## BREST HARBOUR.

*Illustration No. 6.*

THE view of this animated and beautiful scene is taken from a spot, called the Rose battery, from its position on a rock, so termed from its great resemblance to that flower. The Rose battery is at the entrance, and on the right of the harbour.

The gate, on the left of the picture, with reference to our transcript, is the entrance to a battery which commands the whole eastern side of the roads, and which, with some other batteries of great weight, renders the mouth of the harbour as nearly inaccessible to an hostile squadron as art can effect such a provision.

The large tower on the right of the painting is called the Magdalen tower, and is part of an ancient castle, which, with the additions of modern fortifications, serves to assist the general defences on the sea-side of the harbour. The old castle extends in the picture to the second distance, and may be considered to terminate at this projecting rectangular wharf or platform, on which is erected a mast of large dimensions. This is an arrangement of great power and admirable simplicity for the purposes of masting and unmasting ships of war of the largest size. From this platform, we are informed, a line-of-battle ship may be completely masted within an hour.

The general view of the town fills the third distance of the picture.

The first lofty building on the right, is the telegraph of St. Louis's tower, and is in communication with Paris. Next, onwards, is seen a building of

less elevation : this is the hospital for the reception of the sick and wounded of the navy.

Below this, and standing on the quay itself, is a fountain of considerable size and importance.

The lofty building, next on the left, is the harbour clock. The building, seen above it, is occupied by the drawing academies, the public library, the offices of the naval town-major, and those of the harbour works.

Further to the left of the painting, and beyond its centre, and the groupe of shipping which occupies it, is a building having a roof of semicircular construction, under which ships of the first class are continually in progress.

Next beyond the building are seen the factories of the blacksmiths, locksmiths, and sailmakers' departments.

The shipping of the groupe are, one man of war of the first class of the line, cut down, and rigged with temporary masts ; the *Duc d'Angoulême*, a large three-decker fully rigged ; and the *Duguay Trouin*, a heavy 74-gun ship.

#### THE INTERIOR OF THE CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE-DAME.

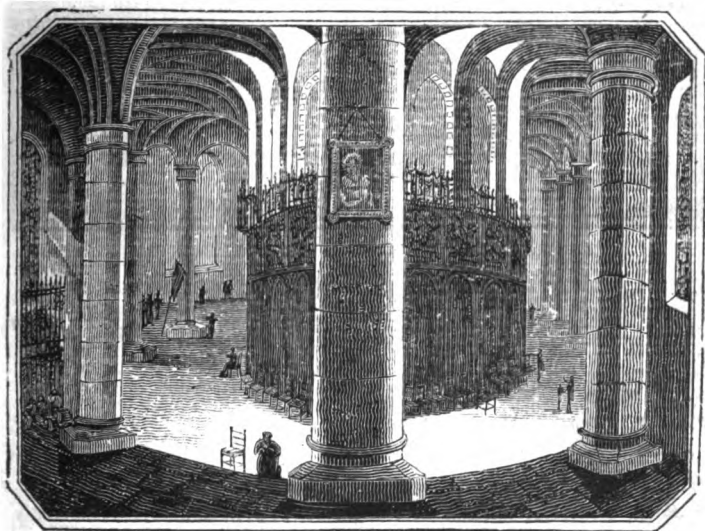


Illustration No. 7.

In the ancient city of Chartres, in one of the south-western departments of France—is the next view. The original is one of the finest Gothic remains still extant in France. The epoch of its foundation is not accurately known. Like all the edifices and institutions of ages long gone by, its history is associated with stories equally marvellous and incredible.

In the circumference of the double row of pillars extending all round the choir, whose elegant enclosure is seen in the picture, seven chapels, of various forms and dimensions, occupy the places which each casement or com-

partment in the fore-ground of the church seems to have been designed to supply, in the distribution of the building. The position of the spectator is supposed to be at the foot of one of these chapels, or on the step which affords a means of communication with two adjoining chapels, in order that he may have a view of that part of the upper church, of which the representation stands before him. These two chapels are respectively called the Knight's Chapel, and the Penitentiary's Chapel.

The Penitentiary's Chapel is within the space which is represented by the spot occupied by the spectators; the entrance of the Knight's Chapel is on the left side of the picture.

The chapel of St. John the Baptist adjoins the Knight's Chapel. The communication with it is through the double row of pillars, by a small flight of stairs with an iron balustrade, the slope of which forms, with the pavement, an angle of about twenty-five degrees.

Further removed from us, we distinguish the Chapel of All Saints, closed by an iron grate, ornamented with a pediment, the style of which is of no remote antiquity. This grate, now used as an enclosure to the chapel, belonged, in former times, to the Church of St. Peter, one of the churches that were either demolished or suppressed in the course of the Revolution.

In the direction of the pillar, against which is placed the standard of a brotherhood, and behind the most distant pillar, there is a small chapel, not within our view; it is named the Chapel of St. Lazarus.

The Chapel of the Scourging is on the right of the spectator, near the large pillar.

Another chapel, entirely concealed from our view, and standing between the Chapel of the Scourging, and that in which several persons are seen kneeling at the foot of an image of the Virgin Mary, is called the Chapel of the Transfiguration.

The enclosure of the choir, which takes up the centre of the picture, is a composition of a Gothic style. Its architecture is of exceeding richness, and its ornaments are in the best taste. The same may be said of the figures which add to its splendour. Basso-relievos are chased in the massive parts, and contained within the semi-circumference of the choir, uniformly representing subjects taken from the lives of Jesus Christ and of the Virgin Mary.

The first basso-relievo perceived (the 19th of the collection) represents the adultery; the second, our Saviour restoring the blind man to sight; the third, (which is the first on the right of the great pillar) the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem; the fourth, the inhabitants of Jerusalem rushing far-wards towards our Saviour, and strewing the ground with branches of the palm tree. The subject of the fifth is, our Saviour in the Garden of Olives; the sixth represents the treachery of Judas, and Peter's violence towards Malchus. In the seventh, and last, we see Jesus Christ tied to a pillar, and scourged by his executioners.

The pictorial merit of these scenes is equalled only by the exquisiteness with which art is here, as it were, quickened into active life.—In the first, smoke is observed flowing over the town, and the water appears to have the regular motion of the sea.—The "*Little Sailor Boy*," leaning over the wall, is every thing but animation. In the second painting, the cobweb upon the top of the picture—the congregation at their devotion, and numerous other characteristics, appeared to the enraptured spectator in all the realities of life.

## HOLYROOD CHAPEL.



Illustration No. B.

THE Ruins of Holyrood Chapel, by Moonlight, was substituted in March, 1825, for Brest Harbour, that of Chartres Cathedral still remaining. This new scene, though not so attractive as the Valley of Sarnen, is, perhaps, the most completely effective of any that we have been presented with—the most judiciously arranged with a view to the capabilities of the plan on which it is constructed, and the most skilfully managed in its various details. Before referring more particularly to those details, it is proper to mention, that it does not represent the scene as it really is, or as it ever was perhaps, but merely in that aspect which seems best suited to the artist's views of "picturesque effect:"—"in order to give a more picturesque effect to the picture, the artist has represented it in its unrepaired state." (*Description of the picture.*)

This new picture of Holyrood Chapel is, as we have said, the very best that has yet been offered to the public, both as to the excellent management of the lights and shadows, and as to the general unity and truth of effect. The principal point of the view consists of the great window by which the chapel was lighted; behind which, the moon rises; and through the ruined tracery of which it casts its pale light upon the internal walls and upon the tombs within the inclosure. This light is finely broken by the remains of two ruined pillars, which rise in the midst of the scene; and it is ingeniously contrasted,

in the right corner of the inclosure, by that of a lamp which is burning on a monument, before which a female is standing, whose heavy shadow falls with great effect upon the pillar behind. The extreme left consists of the walls of the chapel; while the right presents an open colonnade, through which are seen other parts of the building, all wrapt in the same "dim religious light" which beautifies the rest of the scene. Above all, is the open sky gemmed with stars.

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In this ingenious exhibition, the French artists have for once surpassed the English, in the effect they have produced by a particular class of works of art. But here the triumph ceases. *Effect* is the only concession that can be made, since, in talent, they are surpassed by the majority of our theatrical artists; as for example, the splendid Eidophusicon, exhibited a few months since at Drury-lane, and the moving panoramic scenes by the Grieves, at Covent-garden, theatres. Hence the success of the exhibition altogether resembles stage effect, or making the most of certain little incidents on the stage, which give scope to the peculiar excellencies of any performer. The proprietors do not, however, offer the views as exquisite specimens of painting, but rather as skilful adaptations of means to an end. *Effect* does not entirely rest with fine touches of art, but rather with bold and vigorous expression, without being able to stand the test of scrupulous examination, or, as artists would say, in accomplishing *en tout ensemble*, what is not effected separatim, or in detail. By this standard we must regulate the merits of the Diorama; but the general impressions on an uncritical spectator will be found to be nearly equal to those arising from the scenes themselves; and, hence, it becomes a most interesting illusion.

The interior of the building, which has been constructed expressly for this exhibition, resembles a small theatre, the part allotted to spectators consisting of a tier of boxes, raised three or four feet above the amphitheatre or pit. This is surmounted by a circular ceiling, tastefully ornamented with medallion portraits of distinguished painters and sculptors. The whole is made to revolve with the spectators, at intervals of a quarter of an hour; hence, as one picture recedes, the other comes gradually into view.—Admission, boxes 3s.; amphitheatre, 2s.; description, gratis.

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THIS establishment affords an hour of rational recreation, and claims the peculiar attention of all who delight in the study of nature, and who may here witness some of the most interesting varieties of the animal creation. It is divided into three apartments, the admission to each is 1s., or 2s. 6d. to the whole Menagerie. The animals are seen to advantage while feeding, which usually takes place at eight o'clock in the evening, and is announced by the colossal elephant ringing the bell.—Open from nine till nine.

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J. ROBERTSON and Co. St Andrew Square, Edinburgh;

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1826,