

OSTEND.

Aug. 10.—We made for Ostend, and entered the harbour early in the forenoon. The piers are wholly formed of huge piles and cross-beams of timber. The light-house is a lofty narrow tower; it is evidently recent; we concluded that it must be a work of Napoleon, and our conjecture proved right. On landing, we went directly to the Custom-house; and our portmanteaus having been slightly examined, we proceeded to the Rose Inn, kept by Nicholson an Englishman. It was Sunday; but it did not resemble the Sabbath-day of Scotland. Many shops were open; and soon after mid-day, the sounds of fiddling, singing and dancing assailed our ears. As we advanced towards the Church, a Madonna, attired in a red silk robe and a white veil, with a burning lamp placed before her, forcibly reminded us that we had now entered a Roman Catholic country. Within the church, about a hundred children were assembled, the boys ranged on one side, the girls on the other; while a priest walked up and down the centre, catechizing his youthful audience in Flemish, and exhorting them with great apparent earnestness. We had been accustomed in the old city of Edinburgh to see the gables of houses presented to the street, which is the common mode here; but almost every thing else wore a foreign aspect. The sign-boards bore Flemish and French inscriptions, excepting that here and there, since the peace, some awkward attempts had been made at English, particularly by the keepers of low taverns likely to be frequented by our sailors*. It was to be expected that a shore separated from England merely by the Channel, should afford the same

* Over one door was painted, "Spiritual liquors." Over another, "All sortes of drinking sold here." And over a third, "Here sold all mens drink."

plants ; and *Chenopodium maritimum*, *Aster tripolium*, and *Salicornia herbacea*, accordingly presented themselves. But some of those which are common at Ostend are rare in England ; such as the loose panic grass, *Panicum grus galli*, and upright spear-leaved orache, *Atriplex erecta* : And as we strolled along the ramparts and by the sides of the ditches of this fortified town, we met with at least one plant entirely unknown to the British Flora, *Lepidium Iberis* or bushy pepperwort *. We noticed patches of houseleek or *fouet* (*Sempervivum tectorum*) planted on the roofs of the houses of the lower orders, as with us.

Around Ostend there are no gardens nor villas ; indeed, for several miles the country seems almost waste. This, however, must generally be the case near fortified places, where trees or garden-walls are always levelled on the first alarm of a leaguer. We formed no high opinion of the industry of the humbler class of the inhabitants, from this circumstance, that close by their houses were numerous spots of ground lying totally waste and neglected, which, with a very little trouble, might afford excellent crops of kitchen vegetables. Only in one or two places did we observe that they had planted some small beds of potatoes.

Green Market.

Aug. 11.—In the morning we visited the green market (*marché aux herbes.*) There was nothing remarkably fine ; nor, in a seaport town, was any thing extraordinary to be expected. Many peasants, chiefly women, had come in from the country, with asses bearing a pair of panniers, loaded with kitchen-stuffs and small quantities of fruit.

* This plant does not appear to be common in the Netherlands ; for it is not enumerated in Roucel's Flora of that country.

The endive (*Cichorium Endivia* *) was generally good, being long in the leaf, and pretty well blanched. Green purslane (*Portulaca sativa*) was common on the stalls. Carrots (*Daucus carota* var.) of the horn variety, were excellent, being large, and quite clean, or free from disease or the attacks of grubs. The excellence of the carrots probably depends on the nature of the soil, which is sharp and sandy, and of considerable depth. Common centaury (*Chironia centaurium*) must be very abundant on the downs; for we remarked that quantities of it, now in full flower, had been used in place of grass or hay, for packing various articles brought to market.

Fort Wellington.

In the famous siege of Ostend in the beginning of the 17th century, no fewer than 100,000 of the best troops of Spain met their death. Strong, however, as the place must formerly have been, two new bomb-proof forts have of late years been added. By the kindness of M. Delamotte, the Mayor of the town, we procured admission to one of these, now called Fort Wellington. At a short distance, this fort appears buried among the sandhills, but it completely commands the entrance to the harbour. The sea, we were told, frequently inundates the low grounds, and

* The reader will observe, that when any culinary plant, &c. is mentioned for the first time, the Linnæan or scientific name is added. Whoever has been in the practice of looking into French, German, or Italian horticultural works, where this is not attended to, will be convinced of the propriety of adopting such a rule. Our own vernacular names are frequently dubious in their application; and if a foreigner were to consult Johnson's Dictionary, he certainly would have no chance of being extricated from his difficulties, the Doctor seldom giving any other kind of explanation than this: "Endive, a plant,"—"Purslane, a plant." In the case of foreign plants, the nomenclature of Willdenow's edition of the *Species Plantarum* is generally adopted; for plants indigenous to Britain, that of Sir J. E. Smith's *Flora* is preferred.

throws down parts of the old out-works ; but the glacis of Fort Wellington next to the sea, is strongly faced with large masses of grey limestone from Tournay, which will probably long withstand the action of that element. Among the sandhills we found cut-leaved elder (*Sambucus nigra* var. γ), and sea-buckthorn (*Hippophaë rhamnoides*). *Hordeum maritimum* was not uncommon by the sides of the devious path through the downs ; and *Anchusa officinalis* appeared in one or two spots. In some places, near the Fort, small wisps of wheat-straw had been pushed deep into the sand, in order to arrest the blowing. In other places, *Arundo arenaria* and *Elymus arenarius*, had been planted, but in a slovenly and injudicious manner. The sandflood still proves very troublesome ; and Fort Wellington was in many parts almost blocked up with drifted sand at this time.

Numbers of peasant women who had been at market with country produce, were now plodding their weary way homeward, along the firm beach from which the sea had retreated, seated on their asses, between the two empty panniers. They formed an extensive irregular cavalcade more than a mile in length, and produced altogether quite a novel and foreign scene.

From Ostend to Bruges.

In the afternoon, we set off for Bruges, by a commodious barge, dragged by two horses, along a noble canal. This canal is from 80 to 100 feet wide: it is upon one level, or has only a sea-lock at a place called Sass, from whence it goes nearly in a straight line to Bruges, which is perhaps about 14 miles distant. It is kept in excellent repair, the banks being supported with stake and rice work of willow and alder. The country, as far as the eye could embrace it, was quite level. The crops were rye, wheat, barley, buckwheat, flax, beans