architecture, so long known in Europe by the appellation of "Gothic," a term, however, which the architectural antiquaries of the present age, seem generally disposed to reject; towards the conclusion of the succeeding century it arrived at its highest state of perfection.

The origin of this style has occupied the attention, and divided the opinions, of most of the learned and able antiquaries of England and elsewhere, and still remains involved in uncertainty and conjecture. It would be foible to our purpose, to enter into a minute investigation of the various theories which have been promulgated on this subject; but we may observe, that we gratifyly concur in opinion with those authors—and they are far the greater and more judicious number—who derive the pointed arch, the characteristic feature of the style, from the East, and suppose it to have been introduced immediately after the Crusades. To us, indeed, it appears that nothing but the most mistaken national zeal could have induced learned and ingenious men to employ their talents, and hazard their reputation, in the vain endeavour to win for Britain the honour of inventing the style, on such feeble grounds as those which they have stated—namely, the supposed origin of the pointed arch, as having arisen from the intersection of two semicircular ones, of which an instance has been discovered in a church of the eleventh century. A little reflection would, we think, at once suggest, that the arch formed by a slight deviation from the inclined sides that by their concourse from the apex of a triangle, would be the earliest and most obvious attempt of its kind; and that it was, the observations of the most intelligent travellers have proved incontestably. The advocates of the early origin of the 'pointed style' in Gothic architecture," says the learned Dr. Edward Clarke, "will have cause enough for triumph in the Cyclopean Gallery, at Tynys, exhibiting 'lancet arches' almost as ancient as the time of Abraham." And he afterwards observes, that "it is evident that the acute or lancet arch is, in fact, the oldest form of arch known in the world, and that examples of it may be referred to in buildings erected before the war of Troy." "Lancet arches" are to be found also in the Cyclopean buildings of Ireland, as well as in many of the early churches and round towers, in which that style was still preserved. We have no intention, however, of claiming the invention of the pointed style for Ireland, for it is not (as certain Classic builders of modern churches seem to imagine,) the mere presence of pointed arches in an edifice that constitutes what is properly called a Gothic building, but the harmonious adaptation of all the parts of the structure to that, its leading feature. And, if we consider that such an arrangement must intuitively, and of necessity, have occurred to the skilful architect, who, in constructing an edifice, should adopt the pointed arch, as the distinguishing characteristic of its style, we shall, perhaps, be at no loss to account for the origin of "Gothic Architecture," or for the apparently extraordinary circumstance of "Gothic" churches having appeared simultaneously in almost every part of Europe. We are borne out, we think, in this conclusion, by a reference to the pointed architecture of England, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. We see, indeed, the architects of each country travelling at one and the same time towards the same goal, but yet by very different routes. Each endeavoured, by successive efforts, to get rid of unharmonious incongruities; and though they might, and we are sure they did, borrow occasionally from each other the graces which individual fine taste suggested, they still preserved in their general details, such individual characteristics as make the ecclesiastical architecture of each nation peculiar, and distinct from that of every other. If these observations be well founded, it is vain and useless any longer to enquire what country invented the pointed style of architecture. It was the natural result of the adoption of the pointed arch in ecclesiastical architecture, at a period when the principles of taste began to be generally understood and acted upon. "When men enquire," says Horace Walpole, "who invented Gothic buildings they might as well ask, who invented bad Latin?" The former was a corruption of the Roman architecture, as the latter was of the Roman language. Both were debased in barbarous ages, both were refined as the age polished itself; but neither were restored to the original standard. Beautiful Gothic architecture was engraven on Saxon deformity; and pure Italian succeeded to vitiated Latin." But we wander, perhaps, from our subject, though we hope and believe our readers will pardon the digression.

THOMOND BRIDGE, LIMERICK.

Among the various interesting objects which the scenery of the Shannon presents to the lover of the picturesque are several that stand in the town across its mighty stream, to connect the opposite provinces, are not the least conspicuous or imposing. The former will lock with pleasure at the picturesque variety and irregularity of form observable in their rude arches, and their long and low horizontal length of outline, will remind him forcibly of one of the most frequent incidents in the classic compositions of the great Italian landscape painter,
Claude Lorraine: The latter will view them with no less interest as being generally the most ancient and important remains of their kind now existing in Ireland.

The origin of stone bridges in Ireland is not very accurately ascertained: but this much at least appears certain—that none of any importance were erected, previous to the 12th century. In that age our annals record the erection of two bridges over the Suck, and one over the Ballylongford, by the Monarch Turlough O'Connor. There is reason however to consider that those bridges were of wood, and that the first structures of the kind, of stone, were erected by, or after the arrival of the Anglo-Norman.

Of these, the subject of our prefixed illustration ranks as one of the most ancient, having been erected by the English adventurers as a necessary step to their intended subjugation of the ancient province of Thomond; and when we observe the rudeness and apparent unskilfulness of its construction, and consider how comparatively short-lived many of the noblest structures of the kind have been, we may well wonder at its power in resisting for so many ages the destroying hand of time, and the great force of such a great and rapid river.

Thomond bridge has the merit of being perfectly level. It crosses the main arm of the Shannon from the N.E. extremity of the English town, and is built on fourteen arches, the span of each of which is about 120 feet. According to tradition, the original expense of this venerable structure was but thirty pounds.

On one side of the locality of Thomond bridge, there are many historical recollections of a deep and saddening interest; but the presiding spirit of our little journal bids us beware of bringing them into notice,—and we gladly oblige. To see our countrymen of all classes and denominations, "united in the bonds of nature," is our first wish—our most ardent aspiration, and the page of history that would mar this consummation, by exciting one malignant recollection, or one ungenerous retribution, we desire,—as it should be the desire of all good men,—to leave buried in silent oblivion. In lieu of such, let the reader take the following beautiful sonnet to the Shannon; the composition of a gentleman of rank, and what is better, of patriotism and talent, who resides upon the bank of the noble river he apostrophises.

P.

THE SHANNON.

River of billows! to what mighty heart The tide-wave rushes of the Atlantic spread—
River of quiet depths! by cultured bees, Romantic wood, or city's crowded mart—
River of unspeakable beauty—Our love is not to share From their lone mountain-cradles, wild and free Nursed with the faws, lulled by the wood larks glee, And Bessy's hymenial song apart.—
River of chieftains! whose baronial halls Like veteran warders, watch each wave-worn steep, Portumna's towers, Bunratty's regal walls, Carrick's stern rock, the Geraldine's grey keep—
River of dark mementos!—must I close My lips with Limerick's wrongs—with Aghrim's woes? "

A de V.

A TOUR TO CONNAUGHT.

LETTER III.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL.

Sir,—I ought to make some excuse, sufficient to satisfy your readers, for commencing a tour to Connaught, and in the course of five weeks getting no further than the hill of Cappagh. It is but a poor plea to urge that your undersider, Terence O'Toole, has something else to do than indulge tours. You can make yourself with this reduction, which I suggest for my own benefit as well as yours,—namely, that during the intervals of my performance, you have been able to supply your readers with miscellaneous hints and comments, as if good for nothing, by his own family, from the redoubtable hero of Wexford, the great prime minister of England—he who achieved a greater moral victory than that of Mont St. Jean, when neutralizing or overcoming political and religious animosities, he set a question at rest that had vexed the world for nearly three centuries. As this is residing on your forbidding ground of politics, I suppose you will use your scissors here, good, as long as I could not touch the exact part. My-thebye, Dangan itself is altered as much as Dangan—Walesley—the one as much for the worse as the other for the better. I have, I remember, a noble mansion, surrounded by walls between old oak trees, and altogether befitting a noblesman's residence—but alas, it passed from the hands of its absentee lord in consequence of the remuneration of a bad tenant. How rack-teenings can ever be of any advantage to the race, he made use of all the putting shares of his brothers to describe. I wish I knew, and said to O to his name. However, it is Kerryl! No, sir, of all the country from Leeds to the Boyne, then, in wretched river which it becomes the province of Slaine, washed some—meets the tide.

Where was a—\-- When Jones was And came to

But here though the bridge was for a very ride our coach company and the approach from the west would not take before the mouth side of the river holder's potato grove acquire in perfection, and the reader may easily comprehend, with as much not consent without receiving a

But take my word for it, it is a very

The right of the view only a fine and the ancient import given some trouble use and origin. I I for definiteness appear too large and in size to always flat at the top the cornely; for the consultations with the differences among the ancient and ancient the name of the was such the other, the North Men—places of the introduction the more, and the Boyd, the Cathedral of Clon- the height, &c. The up forest, of the famous seat of the Hert St. Finian's of St. Patrick, etc. Such to which the whole Ireland, and then, and the better.

The ver the better and as the sake quieter and more the Irish, it is the other, and receiving from 1 books, wit

The wisdom of Scripture, that wisdom from hi