

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott  
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London  
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer  
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt  
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier  
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder  
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George  
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust  
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot  
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy  
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius  
Chamberlain Tersteegen Gilm Grillparzer Georgy  
Brentano Claudius Schiller Lafontaine Kralik Iffland Sokrates  
Strachwitz Bellamy Schilling Raabe Gibbon Tschchow  
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gibbon Tschchow  
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpius  
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Goedicke  
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist Mörike Musil  
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus  
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus  
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke  
Nestroy Marie de France  
Nietzsche Nansen Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht Ringelnatz  
Marx Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz  
von Ossietzky May vom Stein Lawrence Irving  
Petalozzi Platon Pückler Michelangelo Knigge Kock Kafka  
Sachs Poe Liebermann Kock Korolenko  
de Sade Praetorius Mistral Zetkin



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**The "Ladies of Llangollen" as  
Sketched by Many Hands; with  
Notices of Other Objects of  
Interest in "That Sweetest of  
Vales"**

John Hicklin

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THE "LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN,"  
as sketched by many hands;  
with notices of  
OTHER OBJECTS OF INTEREST  
in  
"THAT SWEETEST OF VALES."

BY JOHN HICKLIN,  
editor of the "chester courant," author of the "history of chester  
cathedral," etc. etc.

CHESTER:  
THOMAS CATHERALL, EASTGATE ROW;  
london: whittaker & co.; ackermann & co., strand;  
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mdcccxlvii.

p. ii to  
MISS LOLLY AND MISS ANDREW,  
the  
PROPRIETORS AND OCCUPIERS OF PLAS NEWYDD.  
the famed retreat of  
"The Ladies of Llangollen,"  
the following pages  
are most respectfully inscribed,  
by  
their obedient servant,

THE PUBLISHER.



## p. 1 THE LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN.

From the early age of Cambrian history, when the peerless beauty of the high-born Myfanwy Fechan awoke the passion and the poesy of her admiring bard, Howel ap Einion Llygliw, down to the modern days of the more humble, but not less renowned maiden, "Sweet Jenny Jones;" Llangollen, "that sweetest of vales," seems to have been associated with recollections of tender and romantic interest. Our narrative, however, albeit it relates to the Ladies of Llangollen, refers not to whispered vows and moonlight serenades between gallant chiefs and damsels of noble birth; nor to sentimental tales of love in a cottage; but it is rather devoted to the records of a friendship, whose incidents and eccentricities have engaged the attention of many eminent *literati* and tourists. Most persons who take any interest in the scenery or topography of North Wales, have either seen or read of that singular p. 2 residence, Plas Newydd, at Llangollen, for so many years the home of Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby.

About the year 1778, these ladies, impelled by a desire to lead a secluded life of celibacy, forsook the gay and fashionable circles in which they had moved; and in their search for a fitting spot, on which to pass their days together in devoted friendship to each other, and in acts of benevolence and charity to their neighbours, they visited Llangollen. Rambling along this charming locality one balmy evening, when the tranquil beauty of the lovely valley was lighted up by the mild splendour of the moon, their eyes rested upon a cottage that stood on a gentle eminence near the village; and there they resolved to fix their abode. They accordingly purchased the estate; built a new cottage on the site of the old one, in a remarkably unique and somewhat grotesque style of architecture; and laid out gardens, pleasure grounds, and rural walks with grottoes, temples, conservatories, rustic bridges, and other accessories for enjoying, in the undisturbed quiet of their own domain, the natural charms of their picturesque retreat. Their mode of life being singular, and their costume still more so (for they assumed a style of head-dress resembling that of men, and always wore long cloth coats, rather like ladies' riding habits), they soon attracted the attention of the many travellers who passed through North Wales; and

as they kept up an extensive and active correspondence with several eminent authors p. 3 and persons of distinction, the "Ladies of Llangollen," for so they were always designated, made a much greater sensation in their seclusion, than many less remarkable persons who are constantly living in the business and bustle of society. Hence many literary pilgrimages were made to the recluses of Plas Newydd; and the "even tenor" of their way was often diversified by the calls of the illustrious, the learned, and the curious; from whom they were as willing to learn what was passing in politics, literature, and general gossip, as were their visitors desirous of having a peep within the charmed circle of this mountain solitude. Their motive for adopting this romantic seclusion is thus stated in "Steward's Collections and Recollections:" —

"Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby were young ladies of beauty and rank, who loved each other with so true an affection, that they could never bear the afflicting idea of a separation, which the marriage of either might occasion. They therefore resolved on lives of celibacy, and refusing many handsome offers, and remaining deaf to the persuasions of their friends, they retired to the beautiful Vale of Llangollen, to enjoy the happiness of each other's company, that as their friendship began in infancy, it might be perpetuated through life. The traveller, in passing by the celebrated abode of these interesting women, must contemplate with a sigh that excessive friendship which could tear from the bosom of society two of its brightest ornaments, to bury them in the depths of seclusion: —

p. 4 'Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,  
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.'

"It is on this subject Miss Seward employs her poetical talents, in her well-known poem of 'Llangollen Vale.' — The following is an account of these

celebrated ladies, extracted from a periodical work published in the year 1796. 'Miss Butler and Miss Ponsonby are now retired from the society of men into the wilds (!) of Llangollen in Wales, where they have resided seventeen years. Miss Butler is of the Ormond family, and had five offers of marriage, all of which she rejected. As Miss Ponsonby, her particular friend and companion, was supposed to have been the bar to her matrimonial union, it was thought proper to separate them, and Miss Butler was confined. The two ladies, however, found means to elope together, but being soon overtaken, were brought back to their respective relations. Many attempts were again made to draw Miss Butler into marriage, though in vain; not many weeks after, the ladies eloped again, each having a small sum with her. The place of their retreat was confided to a female servant of the house. Here they lived many years, unknown to any of the neighbouring villagers, otherwise than by the appellation of the 'Ladies of the Vale.' No persuasions could ever get them from this retreat. A lady from Ireland told the collector of these articles the following anecdote relative to these female friends:—An p. 5 Irish nobleman (Lord Fingal) happening to be travelling in the neighbourhood of Llangollen Vale, and having heard much of Lady E. Butler and Miss Ponsonby, felt a desire to see and converse with them. But how he could obtain this pleasure (as the ladies seldom or never saw company, and were fond of a recluse life) was the question. At length he bethought himself of a method the most likely to answer the purpose, without the appearance of forwardness or indelicacy. He sent his servant with the following verbal message:—'Lord Fingal, travelling in this neighbourhood, sends his respectful compliments to Miss Butler and Miss Ponsonby, and informs them that he sets out to-morrow morning for Ireland,

and would be happy to be the bearer of any commands of theirs to that country.' This message had the effect which his lordship desired. He received, in return, a kind and friendly invitation to take tea with the ladies, which he, of course, accepted with much pleasure.—Lord Fingal (the collector's informant added) was peculiarly charmed with the amiable behaviour of these interesting enthusiasts of friendship. He found not in them the gravity, formality, and demureness of virgin recluses, but the ease of liveliness, and animated conversation of happy, cultivated, and polished minds."

On June 2, 1829, death severed the faithful friendship which had existed for so many years between the eccentric residents at Plas Newydd, by removing from this earthly scene Lady Eleanor p. 6Butler, who had attained the advanced age of 90; and in December 9, 1831, Miss Ponsonby, who was seldom seen (except by her domestics) after the decease of her attached companion, was called to her "long home." They are both buried in the church-yard of Llangollen, where a stone monument is erected to their memory. On this record of mortality are inserted the following memorials:—

Sacred to the Memory of  
*The Right Honourable*  
LADY ELEANOR CHARLOTTE BUTLER,  
Late of Plbs Newydd in this Parish.  
*Deceased 2nd June, 1829,*  
Aged 90 Years.  
*Daughter of the Sixteenth, Sister of the Seventeenth*  
EARLS OF ORMONDE AND OSSORY.  
Aunt to the late, and to the present  
MARQUESS OF ORMONDE.

*Endeared to her friends by an almost unequalled excellence of heart, and by manners worthy of her illustrious birth, the admiration and delight of a very numerous acquaintance from a brilliant vivacity of mind undiminished to the latest period of a prolonged existence. Her amiable condescension & benevolence secured the grateful attachment of those by whom they had been so*

*long and so extensively experienced. Her various perfections crowned by the most pious and cheerful submission to the Divine Will, can only be appreciated, where it is humbly believed, they are now enjoying their Eternal Reward, and by her of whom for more than fifty years, they constituted that happiness, which through our Blessed Redeemer, she trusts will be renewed when THIS TOMB shall have closed over its latest tenant.*

*“Sorrow not as others who have no hope.”*

*1 Thess. Chap. 4. v. 13.*

*p. 7 SARAH PONSONBY*

*departed this Life*

*on the 9th December, 1831, Aged 76.*

*She did not long survive her beloved Companion LADY ELEANOR BUTLER, with whom she had lived in this valley for more than half a century of uninterrupted friendship. “But they shall no more return to their House, neither shall their place know them any more.” Job, Chap. 7. v. 10.*

*Reader pause for a moment and reflect not on the uncertainty of human life but upon the certainty of its termination, and take comfort from the assurance that “As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him, shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Heb. Chap. 9. v. 27, 28.*

On the same tombstone is also the following inscription, to the memory of a faithful servant, who accompanied “the Ladies” from Ireland, the country of their nativity.

In Memory of

MRS. MARY CARRYL,

Deceased 22 November, 1809.

This Monument is erected by Eleanor Butler and

Sarah

Ponsonby of Plas Newydd in this Parish.

*Released from Earth and all its transient woes,  
 She whose remains beneath this Stone repose,  
 Steadfast in faith resigned her parting breath,  
 Looked up with Christian joy and smiled in death.  
 Patient, Industrious, Faithful, Generous, Kind,  
 Her Conduct left the proudest far behind;  
 Her Virtues dignified her humble birth,  
 And raised her mind above this sordid earth.  
 Attachment (Sacred bond of grateful breasts)  
 Extinguished but with life, this Tomb attests,  
 Reared by Two Friends who will her loss bemoan,  
 Till with her ashes — Here shall rest their own.*

p. 8 In 1832, the home of “the Ladies of Llangollen” was sold by auction, by the late renowned “knight of the hammer,” Mr. George Robins, who put forth the following advertisement, in his characteristic style of decorative description.

“IN NORTH WALES.

\*\*\*\*\*

Particulars and Conditions of Sale  
 of the

LADY ELEANOR BUTLER AND MISS

PONSONBY’S

LITTLE PARADISE

AT LLANGOLLEN,

Of which a more enlarged description will appear  
 on the other side.

IT IS ALL FREEHOLD,

And it need hardly be remarked that it is in the  
 most favoured Spot in

NORTH WALES;

Which will be Sold by Auction

by

\*\*\*\*\*

Mr. GEORGE ROBINS,

\*\*\*\*\*

at the auction mart, london,

On THURSDAY, June 28, 1832, at Twelve o’Clock,

in one lot,  
BY DIRECTION OF THE EXECUTORS.

p. 9 May be viewed only with Tickets, and Particulars had Twenty-one Days prior to the Sale at the Lion Hotel, Shrewsbury; the Inns at Llangollen, and Corwen; the Great Hotel, Bangor; Waterloo, Liverpool; York House, Bath; and at Mr. GEORGE ROBINS'S Offices, London.

N.B. The appropriate Furniture, Service of Plate, Elegancies of the Chateau, extensive Library of Books, and all the valuable Appendages, will be submitted to Public Competition the latter End of the Month of July, by Direction of the Executors.

### **PARTICULARS, &c.**

Mr. ROBINS is not a little proud that it hath been his good fortune to be selected by the Executors of the Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby to direct the sale of their far-famed Domicile. He feels that an apology will be due to all those who are familiar with its beauties and peculiarities, for the very imperfect recital which follows, while those who are yet to be gratified with the sight of it, may imagine he has drawn some little upon "Fancy's sketch." There is nothing of pretension in its outward form, it indicates but moderately the comfort that presides within, inasmuch as will be found congregated all the *agremens* pertaining to more consequential habitations. Considerable tact is conspicuous everywhere; but none more unequivocally displayed than in the lightsome little Dining Room, contrasted with the gloomy, yet superior grace of the Library, p. 10 into which it opens. This room is fitted up in the Gothic style, the Windows are of ancient painted glass "*shedding their dim religious light.*"

### **THE SALOON OF THE MINERVAS**

Is the repository of the choice Library. The auxiliary Offices are very commensurate, the grounds are disposed in such good order as is the natural consequence of pure taste, the Kitchen Garden is neatness itself, and the Fruit trees are of the rarest and finest sort, and luxuriant in their produce. Many and shaded

gravel walks encircle this elysium,

Which is adorned with curious and rare Shrubs and Flowers. It is nothing in extent but

EVERYTHING IN GRACE AND BEAUTY,

United with a great variety of foliage. Upon the Freehold is a considerable quantity of valuable Timber which overhangs

a deep and hollow glen;

In its entangled bottom, a frothing brook leaps and clamours o'er the rough stones in its channel towards

THE VALE OF LLANGOLLEN.

To speak of the latter would be quite superfluous, few, if any, are unacquainted with the wildness and surpassing beauty of the most admired spot in North Wales. Its contiguity to the little romantic village, giving the opportunity either to indulge in the gaiety of this place, or recreate in retirement, (as shall seem best suited to varied inclination), there are fortunately both auxiliaries to this scene (it had almost been said of enchantment). The verdant Lawns, dotted with rare plants, the scenic beauties, and the woodland scenery combined, plead in extenuation of this lofty tone. The whole is encompassed by rich meadows, wearing a park-like appearance; held with the freehold, which is limited to less than Five Acres. A truly beautiful Portico of carved Oak leads to this

**DOMICILE OF COMFORT.**

The whole lower Story of which, on the outside, is covered with the richest carved Oak, and within which will be found a Dining Room 15 feet by 15, with handsome Chimney Piece, and carved Oak Doors and Wainscoting.

A Library, 13 feet by 14 feet 6 inches, with Three Gothic Windows of carved Oak and splendid stained Glass, exhibiting old Armorial Bearings, and forming a Bow Window, handsome Chimney Piece of yellow and white marble, and Recesses fitted up with Gothic Book Cases, and the Doors and Architrave of old carved Oak.

An admirably constructed Kitchen, carved Oak Doors and Window Facia, a very handsome carved Oak Screen and Seat, Grate Ovens, Hearths, Stew Holes, &c.

A Housekeeper's Room, beautifully fitted up with carved Oak Presses, Oak Doors and Window Frames.

p. 12A large Larder with fixed Tables, Hooks, &c. together with an ample Cellar, both so situated as to be perfectly cool in the hottest weather.

Wash-house, Scullery, Coal-house, &c., a Staircase of carved Oak, Walls and Ceilings of the same beautifully ornamented Gothic Architecture. This is one of the most beautiful things that can be conceived.

### **FIRST FLOOR.**

An excellent Bed Room, fixed Book Shelves and carved Oak Door, Chimney Piece and Window Facia, an excellent best Bed Room, Oak Doors, fancy Cornice, and cross Ceiling Beams of carved Oak, a very handsome Chimney Piece of the same.

A light Dressing Room and Closet, Gothic carved Oak Doors, &c. fitted up with Book Shelves. Over the Staircase a commodious Pantry, Shelves and Presses for China and Plate, Oak Doors of carved open work. The Sashes of the Windows are all Metal.

### **ATTIC STORY.**

Two good Servants' Rooms, and a Store Room. The Premises consist of

### **FOUR GARDENS**

In the best order, and well stocked with all kinds of Fruit Trees, Vegetables, and Flowers.

### **FIVE PASTURE FIELDS**

Of the richest Land, well timbered, Rustic Bridges, Summer Houses of richly carved Oak, and Rustic p. 13Seats, Cow and Calf-house, Garden-house, Yard, Store-house, &c. An excellent Engine Pump.

This celebrated Place was the Property, and for more than half a Century the Residence of the late Lady ELEANOR BUTLER and

Miss PONSONBY. It is situated upon a Piece of rich Table Land, just above the Port and Market-town of Llangollen, and commands a View of the Valley of the Dee, both up and down, is close to Valle Crucis, Dinas Brbn, and many of the most beautiful Scenes in Wales. The Taxes are very light.

**CONTENTS OF THE FREEHOLD PART OF THE ESTATE.**

	A	R	P
House, Offices, and Shrubbery	0	3 <sub>4</sub>	1
Flower Garden	0	0 <sub>7</sub>	2
Garden House, Court and Poultry ditto	0	0 <sub>2</sub>	1
Part of Lawn	0	3	8
Nursery	0	0 <sub>0</sub>	2
Field	2	0 <sub>2</sub>	1
Total	4	0 <sub>3</sub>	1

**THE LANDS CONTIGUOUS ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

1a. 1r. 20p. part of Lawn; and 3r. 26p. of Gardens and Shrubbery, held from year to year, from Ousley Gore, Esq., at a rent of #

3r. 13p. part of Lawn and Flower Garden, held in same manner from Hon. F. West, at a rent of #

4a. 1r. 30p. being two Fields, the Glen, and a p. 14Kitchen Garden, from Hon. Mr. Mostyn, yearly at a rent of #

1a. 2r. 16p. a Field from J. Dicken, Esq. at a yearly rent of #

TOTAL QUANTITY, 13 ACRES 38 PERCHES."

\*\*\*\*\*

The exaggerated style of this ornate announcement will, doubtless, excite a smile, and we suspect that some of our readers, who know the locality, will laugh outright at the very fanciful stretch of imagination, which led the worthy auctioneer to speak of the "*Port of Llangollen*."

The purchasers of the property were Miss Lolly and Miss Andrew, the present owners and occupiers of Plas Newydd, between whom and the late "*Ladies of Llangollen*," an intimate friendship existed.

In August 1832, Mr. Robins offered by public auction the furniture and fittings of this unique villa; the following is a copy of the advertisement, and the catalogue of the sale extended over seventy quarto pages.

\* \* \* \* \*

"LLANGOLLEN, NORTH WALES.  
Mr. GEORGE ROBINS

Has the pleasure most respectfully to announce to the Nobility, Lovers of the Fine Arts, and those who delight in objects of interest, and indeed to the Public generally, that having sold "*Plas Newydd*," he is instructed by the Executors of

p. 15 THE LADY ELEANOR BUTLER  
and  
MISS PONSONBY,

To offer for Unreserved Competition, at the Domicile so long hallowed as the abode of friendship,

On MONDAY, the 13th day of AUGUST, 1832,  
And many succeeding Days, at Eleven for Twelve  
o'clock precisely, on each day,

the following  
INTERESTING AND VALUABLE PROPERTY,  
appertaining to the residence,

And which for extent, variety and novelty, forms a most brilliant Assemblage, certainly unexampled in the Annals of Auctions; it having been congregated by those highly talented Ladies, the fair "*Mistresses of Plas Newydd*," during a series of 50 years, aided by

their joint taste, and at considerable expense, including the appropriate

#### FURNITURE OF THE CHATEAU,

Comprising a Drawing Room suite in curtains, glasses, centre, card, and occasional tables; ottomans, sofas, couches, chairs of various descriptions, yet in unison, whatnots, cheffioneers; the dining room is very complete; there are excellent dining tables, chairs, sideboard, writing tables and library chairs.

A RANGE OF BOOKCASES & MANY OBJECTS,  
elaborately carved in oak;  
p. 16A STRONG BOX OF GREAT ANTIQUITY, AND  
CARVED,

It was once the Property of his late Royal Highness  
THE DUKE OF YORK.

The Furniture of the Bed Chambers and Offices is of a corresponding character;

#### EXCELLENT TABLE AND BED LINEN,

The equipments of the Garden are of a very superior description; a variety of seats, curious etruscan flower vases, garden implements, etc.

A GREEN HOUSE OF GREAT BEAUTY,  
ornamented with painted and stained glass;  
An extensive Collection of Plants, Dairy and Brewing Utensils;  
SERVICES OF CHINA AND GLASS,  
In complete sets, for the Table, the Dejeuni, the Dessert, &c. &c.

#### SIDEBOARD OF PLATE,

Comprising many rare chased and antique items; dishes and covers, salvers, waiters, tea and coffee equipages, candlesticks, liquor and cruet frames, spoons and forks;

and a variety of useful articles for the sideboard and table.

#### JEWELLERY AND ELEGANCIES,

Presenting many pleasing and valuable Ornaments p. 17for the person, in necklaces, car-rings, crosses and brooches, most of them

inclosing the hair of the donors, particularly one of great interest,  
possessing

A LOCK OF "MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS" HAIR.

interesting miscellanies, curiosities and relics, viz.

Very fine missals, beautifully illuminated; autographs of numerous renowned personages, particularly a letter by "Charles the First" to Lady Fisher, from Whitehall, during his confinement; presentation snuff boxes, many of value, and most with lines of dedication; relics of great antiquity, and many of modern date, presented by travellers, forming altogether a Museum of great interest and amusement.

several remarkably fine cameos and intaglios.

A MODEL OF THE WARWICK VASE, IN SILVER,

Richly Chased, most exquisite in Workmanship and perfectly  
Unique.

Many curious models, bronze busts, and in Sevres bisquit; Musical and other elegant Clocks, in ormolu; China essence, and flower vases; a large Folian harp, telescopes, microscopes, &c.

AN EXTENSIVE AND VALUABLE LIBRARY OF BOOKS,

Comprising many Thousand Volumes, elegantly bound in folio, quarto, and octavo, (large and small.)

p. 18A SERIES OF ETCHINGS.

THE POWER AND PROGRESS OF GENIUS,

executed by

THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH,

and presented by her

TO THE PRINCESS AMELIA;

an autograph letter from

THE PRESENT KING OF FRANCE,

Accompanying the Memoirs du Duc de Montessor, in scarlet and morocco, a present from His Majesty to Lady Butler and Miss Ponsonby; with many other contributions and valuable presents from persons of the highest rank and literary acquirements to these highly gifted Ladies.