

THE EXCHANGE, MANCHESTER.

A building called the Exchange, but more aptly named the Lazaret, from its being the resort of vicious characters, and a nest of loathsome disease, formerly occupied what is now an open space in front of the commercial edifice represented in our Engraving. The filthiness and inconvenience of the old building preventing its application to mercantile purposes, it was, in 1792, taken down.

In 1804, the leases of some old buildings, in the Market-place and Exchange-street, having expired, the proprietor, Lord Ducie, offered the ground, on liberal terms, for the erection of the Exchange, and other commercial offices. A fund of £20,000 was formed by four hundred shares of fifty pounds each, and the ground purchased of the noble proprietor at a yearly rent of ten shillings per square yard, when his lordship generously gave 592 yards to the public streets.

On the 21st of July, 1806, the first stone was laid by George Phillips, Esq., (now Sir G. Phillips, Bart. M.P.) and the building then proceeded with such celerity, that, early in the year 1808, the part designed for the Post Office was occupied. On the 2d of January, 1809, the Exchange News-room was opened to the subscribers. In 1809, four hundred new shares, of £30 each, were formed, when the purchase of the land in fee, from the present Lord Ducie, was completed for the sum of £12,000.

The Exchange is built of Runcorn stone, and is a massive and not inelegant design. The columns, (of the Doric order,) twenty-seven feet in height, support an entablature with a decorative frieze and cornice, surmounted with an empanelled parapet. The north or principal front, shewn in the Engraving, is semicircular. The grand entrance is in this quarter, and another opens, on the west, from Exchange-street, through the vestibule to the News-room, and the principal staircase. The Post Office is entered from the south-west corner; and on the east side are staircases leading over this part of the building, and conducting to the ante-chamber of the Dining-room, and to the Library. The arms of Lord Ducie occupy the panel of the parapet over the west entrance; and those of the town of Manchester are similarly placed over the north door.

The ground-floor of the Exchange includes the Exchange-room, two shops, one on each side of the west entrance, the Master's-office and Retiring-office, the Tavern-bar, now Mr. Aubrey's-office, and the Post Office. The situation of the latter is admirably adapted for facilitating the despatch of business.

The Exchange News-room, containing an area of 4060 feet, occupies the whole north front, and is lighted by plate-glass windows, and a semicircular dome light; the glass for the last of these costing not less than £150. The upper part of the room forms the Circulating Library, supported by fluted Ionic columns, that contribute materially to the beauty