



GUNNERSBURY HOUSE.

(From a Water-colour Drawing by Chatelain.)

of Wales, the Prince of Mecklenburgh, the Duke of Portland, Lord Clanbrassill, Lord and Lady Clermont, Lord and Lady Southampton, Lord Pelham, and Mrs. Howe. The Prince of Mecklenburgh went back to Windsor after coffee, and the Prince and Lord and Lady Clermont to town after tea, to hear some new French plays at Lady William Gordon's. The Princess, Lady Barrymore, and the rest of us, played three posts at commerce till ten. I am afraid that I was tired, and gaped. While we were at the Dairy, the Princess insisted on my making some verses on Gunnersbury. I pleaded being superannuated, but she would not excuse me. I promised she should have an ode on her next birthday, which diverted the Prince; but all would not do."

The verses here referred to are printed in H. Walpole's "Letters," Vol. IX., p. 55, but they are scarcely worth repeating here.

In the last century Gunnersbury was a sort of rival of Strawberry Hill, as may be inferred from the song—

"Some cry up Gunnersbury,  
For Syon some declare;  
Some say with Chiswick's Villa  
None other can compare."

The Princess Amelia died in 1786, and soon after that the mansion was pulled down, and the land sold. A Mr. Copland, who bought the lion's share, built a new house on the higher part of the grounds, and this still stands as a puny rival of the present mansion, which is in the Italian style.

It was bought about the middle of the present century by the Rothschilds, and is now owned by Sir Nathaniel Rothschild. It contains several fine paintings and statues, and a fine collection of china. The pictures in the principal rooms are chiefly portraits of the family and their friends. In the billiard-room there is one painting of historic interest—the introduction of the late Baron Lionel Rothschild into the House of Commons, on his first being allowed to take his seat for London, in 1858. He is walking up the centre of the House between his sponsors, Lord John Russell and Captain Bernal Osborne; and among the occupants of the front benches on either side are Lord Palmerston, Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Gladstone, Sir G. Cornwall Lewis, Lord Stanley, and other celebrities of the time.

The gardens and grounds are laid out with great taste; the latter extend to nearly a hundred acres.