

# GRAY'S FERRY, INN, AND GARDEN.

The rapid progress of improvement in our metropolis, and on the banks of the fine rivers which bound it on the east and west, has left us but few vestiges of by-gone days. The remains of antiquity existing, are not only of rich interest to youth, but excite pleasant emotions in the minds of those of ripened age at the close of the past century. They recall the past to the present, and in imagination re-assemble the companions, re-act the sports and pastimes, and reproduce in retrospection, the pleasures of juvenile days—days and seasons, the joyous reality of which have forever fled, and given place to the cares, vexations and vicissitudes of a business life.

Of all the localities of fashionable and pleasurable resort, we have no place near Philadelphia, of more imposing, natural, picturesque grandeur, than the subject of the present reminiscence. The accompanying engraving by George Gilbert, from an original drawing by Mr. Breton, (a landscape painter of promise, who deserves to be better known and encouraged, for his zeal, skill, and indefatigable industry,) is a good view, taken from the eastern side of the bridge, and differs only in the herein-after noted improvements of the Ferry, from an old painting now in possession of the widow of the late Thomas Leiper, Esq. a grand-daughter of George Gray, an early proprietor of the property. Her grand-father George Gray, was a member of the Society of Friends, and one of the first proprietors of a large tract of land, of 199 acres, comprising the present ferry house and adjacent grounds. He was the only son of George Gray, an Englishman, and a public speaker in the Society, who emigrated to this province from Barbadoes, soon after its settlement by its founder, Penn. He inherited a considerable patrimonial estate, purchased a three storied brick dwelling, in South Front street, between Norris' alley and Walnut street, on the west side, with a lot extending to Second street. For its price, (it was said, in those days,) he could have purchased several whole squares on Market street, west of Centre woods. He intermarried with a widow lady of the name of Foster, and located his family in Germantown. They had issue, a son, named George, and a daughter, who lived until she married and became a mother. In a few years the family removed to the western bank of the Schuylkill, the present site of the ferry house and garden. There was an old shingled house on the hill, and a path leading down to the river, over which passengers were ferried in a scow, by a rope extended across, similar to that existing at this time, at what is called Penrose's Ferry, near the mouth of the Schuylkill.

Mr. Gray enlarged the accommodations for his family, by erecting a convenient frame building, adjoining the old tenement on the river side. He increased the accommodations of the ferry establishment, opened an inn, and expended much money in improving the rural site as a flower

garden, on the commanding eminence to the north of his mansion, and overlooking the serpentine river which washes its borders.—Multitudes flocked from the city to this now celebrated place of public entertainment, distant from the old Court House, Market street, four (old) miles, as the mile-stone near the inn now bears record.

About the year 1740, George, the proprietor, and grandfather to the principal part of the present heirs and proprietors, died. By his will, he devised this property and other real estate to his wife for life, remainder at her decease to his only son, George Gray, subject to the payment of certain legacies. George was then a youth, and his devoted surviving parent was concerned about his education. But two grammar schools of any note existed in Philadelphia, and their remoteness from her dwelling, presented an obstacle to the accomplishment of her wishes. Itinerant teachers, seconded by his intelligent mother, gave him the requisite instruction for the ordinary business of life. He had scarcely arrived at manhood, when his mother died, and he became possessed in fee of this valuable estate. His attention was drawn to its immediate improvement: he levelled and widened the present road, through the rock, to the river, and had those solid steps, by which visitors ascend to the garden, and to Say's place on the south, hewn out of the same primitive and permanent formation. George, at an early age, married Martha Ibetson, an English lady, by whom he had ten children. The family continued to live in rural felicity and contentment, until that period of our revolutionary history, when the invading army of Britain, approaching the city, obliged them to abandon their much loved home, and seek elsewhere, a more secure asylum.

By order of the republican Committee of Safety, (of which he was an active and efficient one,) the rope ferry was destroyed, and the scows sunk in the deep channel of the Delaware river. The British soon afterwards took possession of the premises, where they established an outpost. The rabble soldiery destroyed the elegant and spacious garden, consumed the cedar fencing, cut down a part of the woods, and burnt the remainder. Mr. Gray's estate extended over the river on the eastern side, and amongst other improvements, he had erected a good substantial brick dwelling, on the north side of the main road, about fifty yards from the river.—This house the British also occupied; and when they evacuated the city, to consummate the work of devastation, gave it to the flames.—The site is known by the partially filled up cellar, which remains to this day. The ferry house was almost ruined, having been riddled by the cannon of the British, who formed a battery of 18 pounders, which they amused themselves in firing occasionally at the rebels, (so called,) whenever a party presumed to make their appearance on the western heights, near the Darby road.

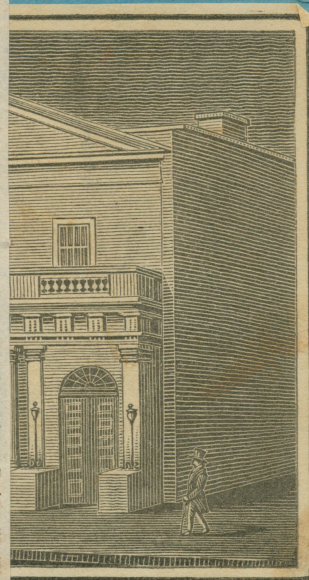
## SWEDEN'S CHURCH.

The Swedish Colony in America came by the authority of the Swedish government, and was administered by its laws. The first settlement was about, now, Wilmington. A fort was erected on the creek still called *Christina*, near its mouth into Delaware, in 1638. Public worship was held there, and after some time, also in a wooden church on the other side. When the population had increased, a decent church of wood was erected, 1646, at Tinnicum, on the Delaware, where the governor resided, with a fort to command the river. A place of worship in form of a block house was built in 1676, at Wicacoa, near the site of the modern church.—This was consecrated the 2d July, 1700, the year after the present church on the aforesaid Christina creek. The pastors of both came together from Sweden and formed the respective parishes here.

Both churches are sixty feet long, thirty wide, and twenty high to the eaves, the walls of Wicacoa are of brick, and of the other of stone, both very solid, still in good condition, the first mentioned has a steeple.

The parish of Wicacoa being very extensive, two churches were built 1764; one in Kingsessing, six miles from Philadelphia, S. W. and the other seventeen N. W. both of stone. All three are incorporated in one charter: The mother church is stiled GLORIA DEI: the

others St. James and St. George respectively. They are neat—well served, and have ample cemeteries.



RE. Feb. 1829.



ELPHIA. March, 1829.

