

Literature, &c.

EXTRACTS FROM NEW WORKS.

LIFE ON THE NILE.—To those who, for the sake of the beauties of nature and the wonders of art, could abandon for a short period their English comforts and luxuries, the life upon the Nile, though monotonous, would, from its strange novelty, be by no means unenlightful. An ardent sun, a majestic river, dusky forms are seen. The eye no longer falls upon European elegance, the ear is no more greeted by European sounds. The heat, too intense for exertion either of body or mind, admits only of a luxurious, do-nothing sort of existence, and it is pleasant to lie upon the couch and allow the thoughts to assume a romantic, tropical colouring, unlike—oh! how unlike our European coldness and fragility, where the useful and expedient are always preferred to the grand and the noble! In the morning, it is delightful to rise with the sun, and, ere he has attained any height in the heavens, to walk by the banks of the majestic Nile, so famed in history, both sacred and profane, in poetry, and in romance. An agreeable breeze springing up generally attempts the atmosphere, braces the frame, and enlivens the spirits. Then, when the sultry sun drives most living objects to seek the friendly shade, it is pleasant, at noon, to glide along in the *cangia* (boat), and, lazily reclining on the couch, to watch the objects that apparently move before the eyes. There is now a low and level sandbank, and a herd of cattle have come down to quench their ardent thirst; then, a bold promontory, or steep headland, clothed with a purple haziness of heat and distance, closes the scene, and we are apparently sailing on the smooth bosom of a peaceful and glassy lake. Farther on, a fine reach of the river opens upon us, and a fresh breeze, taking the crew by surprise, runs the vessel aground, and, "Hamesha ma—Hallela-yah!" in drowsy chorus is chanted as it is pushed off again. Then will the waves often ruffle and fume, verily, as if old Father Nile were indulging in a little fit of anger; but his ire is short lived, and we again glide on, as if this choleric gentleman were the most benign and placid of river deities; such as we have seen him at the Vatican, where in marble majesty he lies, mighty, grand, and composed, despite the myriad of little sprites that play around him. Whilst this calm and dignified serenity continues, his waves assume a glassy smoothness, in which every object is distinctly reflected, and where the river goddesses might arrange their toilet by the aid of this superb natural mirror. Now we come upon the clumsy buffalo, lolling and awkwardly disporting in the water, as if more at home than on land, with head uplifted, and expanded nostril, quaffing the ambient air. On a sandy islet, half a dozen storks may be seen in a composed attitude, standing upon one leg, contemplating themselves in the river,—then stalk, stalk, stalking on, till, alarmed by the nearer approach of the *cangia*, they heavily rise in the air, and vanish to a place of greater security. A sullen plash proclaims that a creeping crocodile, winding his unwieldy, lizard-like form along, has also deserted the sunny bank where he was basking, and, plunging into the stream, he hides himself from the curious ken of the voyager. Then, upon the surface of the water, in the distance, appears a black spot—what is it? what can it be? It approaches—it elongates—'tis a man! A hardy native, who, unmindful of crocodiles and river serpents, himself scarcely less amphibious, is fearlessly swimming across the Nile. A solemn stillness reigns around during the sultry noon-tide heat, and the sounds that alone disturb the sleepy monotony are the drowsy creek of water mills, the ceaseless cry of the peewit, and the wild shriek of the water fowl, and the lazy flapping of the sail, when the breeze has entirely died away. But, when least expected, a sudden gust, a violent eddy of wind comes down from the mountain, flings the vessel on its side—threatens to overturn it—the sleepy crew are aroused—all are on the *qui vive*—consternation reigns on board—every thing is upset—the interior of the cabin is totally deranged. The gale however, proves as transient as unlooked for; the *cangia* is righted, and all again resign themselves to sleep, or to the reveries and musings of the Nile.—*Mrs. Eldwood's Travels.*

DESCRIPTION OF A CHARGE.—When it became perfectly light, a signal gun put the enemy's columns in motion, the whole of his artillery opening almost immediately after. The incessant and violent description of cannonade prevented the British Infantry from interrupting the progress of the French columns; nor did they sustain any loss whatever in the early part of their advance, coming on with a resolute and rapid pace. The 29th were ordered to lie down a short distance behind the brow of the hill, which the soldiers did with arms in their hands, ready to start up at a moment's warning. By this judicious arrangement, the regiment suffered little from the cannonade, altho' the enemy's practice appeared excellent, every shot either striking the ground immediately in front, or passing close over our heads. There is at all times something grand, imposing, and terrific, in the sound of a cannonade. Here we had the astounding noise, with time to contemplate what was passing over us, without the attention being abstracted by great personal danger, or immediate effort at extrication. The effect was consequently very impressive. An old Scotch Sergeant, crouching close to me, permitted his head to attain a very slight elevation, and, with a groan, said, "Good God, sir, this is dreadful!" Without discussing the merits of our situation, I merely advised him to keep down his head; a hint instantly adopted, without any apparent reluctance on his part, and, at the close of the affair, I was happy to find it still on his shoulders. At this period we had the battle entirely to ourselves, no other part of the army being engaged. When the French columns had mounted the ascent, and were so near as to become endangered from the fire of their own artillery, a scene of great animation was exhibited. The summit which had appeared deserted, now supported a regular line of Infantry. Near the colours of the 29th, stood Sir Arthur Wellesley, directing and animating the troops. General Ruffin had nearly surmounted all the difficulties of the ground, when a fire burst forth which checked their advance. His troops wavered. Sir Arthur ordered a charge. With one tremendous shout, the right wing of the 29th, and entire battalion of the 48th, rushed like a torrent down, bayoneting and sweeping back the enemy to the brink of an insignificant muddy stream, nearly equidistant in the ravine which separated the two armies. In the pursuit all order was speedily lost. The men advanced in small parties, destroying those of the enemy who had not ensured their safety by flight. At this moment, when the whole valley was filled with troops, in all the confusion attending the eagerness of pursuit, a column of French Infantry appeared close upon our right flank, facing towards the irregular mass. It became necessary to collect the pursuers, to form a front, and to charge these fresh assailants. This was, by great exertion, accomplished. Broken as we were, an irresistible impetus had been given, and the enemy's column followed the example of those who had mounted the hill at the *pas de charge*. So completely were these attacks repelled, that the British infantry were quietly collected in the ravine, and marched back to the height, without being seriously assailed.—*Major Hay's Narrative of the Peninsular War.*

ST. SEBASTIAN IN 1821.—Near the small town of Passages, which is divided by the neck of the bay, and inhabited by fishermen, we remounted our horses, and rode to St. Sebastian. This beautiful little town, so celebrated in modern history, stands on a small peninsula, the natural defences of which are heightened by well constructed fortifications, commanded by the citadel which is built on the summit of a conical mountain, having its base strongly defended by out works. Both the town and fortifications were at that time exactly in the same condition as they were at the termination of the siege. The breaches effected in the walls by our well served batteries, and the dilapidated, tenanted houses, presented a sad picture of the desolating effects of war. Many streets were entirely deserted, and an unnatural stillness seemed to have succeeded to scenes of strife. Cannon balls and pieces of broken shells, intermingled with fragments of ruined houses, were heaped together in the silent streets—places formerly echoing with the busy hum of commerce, or the lighter sounds of hospitality, but now presenting a melancholy

scene of loneliness and desolation: Few men can stand unmoved on the spot which has been the theatre of glorious deeds; and as I leaned against a huge fragment of the wall, which had fallen in the breach, and surveyed the place where the work of carnage had been most rife, it was with a melancholy feeling that I thought of the transitory meed of valour. In a few years, perhaps, fresh walls would arise from the ruins on which I stood, and other battles be fought at their feet—the recollection of former deeds would be effaced by the brilliancy of later—and to the memory of thousands who had shed their blood before that very breach, nought would remain but a single line of history to record the event their lives had purchased. A few years more, and the stranger would unconsciously repose on the grave of heroes, and the listless hind crush with his plough the mouldering bones of the brave!—*Sir Paul Baghott's Notes: Whittaker's Monthly Magazine.*

A CHARACTER.—We all know that Sir Humphry Davy was the creator of electro-chemistry—that he was the inventor of the safety lamp but few are aware that he was also a poet, and that the chemist wrote the prologue to the *Honey Moon*. We know that he was skilful in angling, for he was the author of *Salmonia*, but we did not know that he was the original green man, and went a fishing in a green dress, with a broad brimmed green hat, stuck with artificial flies, and being, in short, all green, down to his boots of Indian rubber. He was an epicure of the drollest kind, for he was curious in tasting every thing that had not been tasted before, and he interfered in the composition of dishes intended for his own table, thereby encountering the wrath of strange cooks, and running serious risks in inn kitchens. We have long heard his name coupled with aristocratic parties, but we see how he contrived to reconcile the calls of the laboratory and the invitations of great people. He worked till the last minute; and when he was too late for dinner covered his dirty shirt with a clean one, there being no time for changing it. He has been known to wear five strata of shirts at a time, and to have greatly surprised his friends by his rapid transitions from a state of corpulency to that of considerable leanness. This was when, at some moment of leisure, he found time to despoil himself of his *exuvia*. Al! Sir Humphry's experience in high circles (and in the plenitude of his fame they commanded any rank) never gave him ease of manner—he lacked the original familiarity with polished society, and his best efforts at pleasing were marred with a disagreeable bearing, which might sometimes be called pertness, sometimes superciliousness. As in his dress he oscillated between a dandy and a s'oven, so in his manner he vibrated from familiarity to hauteur. In all personal matters he missed the golden mean.

WHY WAS A LITERARY LADY BEEN SATIRICALLY TERMED A BLUE STOCKING?—Because of the origin of the term from the society "de la Calza," (of the *Stocking*;) formed at Venice, in the year 1500; the members being distinguished by the colour of their stockings, the prevailing colour of which was blue. The Society de la Calza lasted till the year 1590, when the soppery of Italian literature took some other symbol. The rejected title then crossed the Alps, and branded female pedantry in Paris. It diverged from France to England, and for a while marked the vanity of the small advance in literature of our female coteries. But the propriety of its application is now gradually ceasing, for we see in every circle, that attainments in literature can be accomplished with no loss of womanly virtue.

WONDERFUL EFFECTS OF CHEMISTRY.—Not to mention the impulse which its progress has given to a host of other sciences, what strange and unexpected results has it not brought to light in its application to some of its most common objects! Who for instance, would have conceived that linen rags were capable of producing more than their own weight of sugar, by the simple agency of one of the cheapest and most abundant acids? that dry bones could be a magazine of nutriment, capable of preservation for years, and ready to yield up their sustenance in the form best adapted to the support of life, on the application of that powerful agent, steam, which enters so largely