

Literature.

REVIEW.

FROM THE SCOTTISH LITERARY GAZETTE.

THE ANNUALS.

THE FORGET ME NOT for 1831; THE JUVENILE FORGET ME NOT for 1831.

"Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtain, wheel the sofa round,
And"

MARGARET love, put away Cowper, and hand me the Forget Me Not. What a magnificent frontispiece! Queen Esther, by Martin. Surely those gentlemen who are in the habit of decrying this artist, must have craniums sadly deficient in some of the most essential organs necessary for appreciating the sublime or beautiful. This plate alone would redeem a portfolio of daubing. We have heard it objected to on account of the number of pillars which are ranged around, apparently of magnitude enough to support the canopy of heaven. But how produce equal grandeur of effect without them? How give us an adequate idea of the Palace of Ahasuerus or the glory and magnificence to which the Jewish orphan was exalted? The time is well chosen, it is when the king, after hearing the impeachment of Haman, and having taken an airing in his parterres of flowers, returns again to the banquet hall, and beholds the culprit imploring for his life at the Queen's feet. Fioden, the engraver, has done great justice to the original. 'The Filer One,' by Miss L. Shappe, is clever. 'An Italian Scene' there is far too much sameness about it. 'The Cat's Paw,' by E. Lindseer, exquisite. Give Lindseer a quadruped, and he is matchless. 'The Painter Puzzled,' not a very palpable bit; the artist we fear has been puzzled to make a painting of it, 'the flat.' 'The Political Cobbler,' by a Chisholm, an artist of rising celebrity. He has enlisted under the banners of Wylie, and appears to be a most promising recruit. The whole of the figures are exceedingly well drawn, and Strap himself appears to the utmost advantage bargaining with an image boy for a plaster-of-Paris Napoleon. 'The Japanese Palace' is a good specimen of Mr. S. Proud's style of water colour painting. 'The Discomfite' by H. Courbald, engraved by C. Rolis, though good, is not so much as we expected from such men. 'Lady Beaufort' is not such a pretty woman as we should have expected a Scottish monarch to fall in love with; but James I. was a prisoner in Windsor at the time. 'The Neotide Retreat' an 'Indian Scene,' and 'Bessy Bell and Mary Gray,' complete the pictorial embellishments of the volume. The literature of all the Annuals we have yet perused has considerably degenerated. We are heart sick of the tales of Tartar banditti, maritime perils, and English Smugglers, so full of mawkish sentimentality, and commonplace incident. It appears as if every key had been struck, every melody extracted, and every modulation tried, which it was capable of sustaining. We have been lectured upon Turkish manners, customs, and appearances, until the mustaches of these uncivilized hords have begun to show face upon the upper lip of some of our literati. Naval enterprise has also had its victims; witness our city fops, strutting in the naval uniform of a striped shirt, and a pair of barbarous whiskers; and, only the other day, we had the satisfaction of seeing a vessel, full rigged and manned, sailing upon the aqueduct which stretches from the Register Office to the West Church, commonly called Prince's Street. The crew looked unspeakably brave, and unmeasurably silly. Your Scottish novel has long been a bad speculation to every one but Mr. Cadell, Mrs. Radcliff, Monk Lewis, and their apostles, have all shrunk into remoteless and distant perspective. The monsters from the German bosoms found the climate of England unsuitable, and have accordingly again retreated to their native fastnesses. What will next be the rages we do not feel disposed to prophesy. This much we have heard, hinted at however, that Mr. Colburn has draughted about five hundred conscripts, whom he has judiciously disposed over the Continent of Europe, to gather incident, at the present momentous crisis, and watch the phases of national character as it develops itself on occasions of political commotion and excitement. Numbers we are told, have already returned, freighted with romantic legends of the French revolution.

There are some good things in the Forget-me-Not, however, for we have among the contributors, Hogg, Moir, Hood, Mitford, Landon, Bayly, Malcolm, Bowles, Bowring, and others of note. We have been exceedingly pleased with Hogg's Sea Story: our friend James appears to be somewhat amphibious, equally in his element on land or water. It is a good specimen

of the supernatural style: The tale of Bessy Bell and Mary Gray is sweetly retold by Delta. The Haunted Hoghead is a good thing, but there can also be too much of a good thing. There is sterling genius in Miss Mitford's sketch, entitled 'The Death of Charles the First.' The character of Cromwell is brought out with consummate skill. Miss Mitford is not so masculine a writer as Joanna Baillie, but she is a superior dramatist, and knows better how to sketch a character by means of those rapid off-hand strokes, which come more by observation than profound thinking. We might enumerate other pieces that have gratified us.

But we must not forget the Juvenile work; and with respect to it, our words shall be few and well ordered. The Infant Samuel is not only the best plate in the volume, but it is the most appropriate that we have seen in a Juvenile Annual. The artist has handled his graver very delicately. About eight or nine others follow, some of them very sweet, others indifferent enough. The literature is, as it should be, for children. Some pieces are very clever, particularly 'Playing at Soldiers,' by Hood, which want of space alone prevents us from quoting.

FROM THE CHRISTMAS BOX FOR JANUARY 1831.

THE WILD BEE'S SONG.

I have come from the banks where the violets bloom,
And the primroses peep 'neath the long yellow broom,
And the blue-bells are ringing soft peals to the breeze,
As it scatters among them bright drops from the trees;
Where the woodbine is wreathing her light pendant bowers,
And the white-breasted hawthorn is lavish of flowers,
And the wild-rose is blushing all lovely to view:—
I kiss'd it this morning while bathed in the dew.

I have been to the meadow where cowslips abound,
And the pansy and purple-tint'd orchis are found,
And the crimson-tipp'd daisies enameled the green,
And the golden-hair'd trefoil gleams gaily between,
And the clover's rich globe on its slight graceful stem
Appears 'midst the grass like an amaranth gem;
From all in their turns I the honey have drain'd;
And I've drunk of the nectar the king's-cup contain'd.

The common's rude plain is no desert to me;
For there blooms the heather profusely and free;
And the harebell is waving her head to the wind,
And the vetch her blue wreath with the rag-wort has twin'd;
And the sweet-scented thyme every hillock has crown'd,
And the blossoming furze sheds its perfume around:
I call this my manor—my ample domain,
Where all owe me tribute, nor owe it in vain.

I enter, unquestion'd, the garden of state,
And rifle the costly parterres of the great,
Where I wander unchidden on light roving wing,
And banquet on flowers that are rais'd for the king:
I seek in his presence, the one I love best,
And murmur my song of delight on his breast;
And I take, when I'm weary, luxurious repose
In the urn of the lily or lap of the rose.

I revel in sunshine and fragrance all day,
There is not a monarch on earth half so gay.
My labour is pleasure, when home with my spoil
I wing my blithe way, and exult in my toil.
The proudest might sigh for my freedom of will,
And the wisest might envy my patience and skill,
And those who improve not their talents withal,
Might take lessons from me to draw blessings from all.

MISS AGNES STRICKLAND.

The following animated description of a battle between an English Cruiser and the Boats of a French Ship of War, we extract from Mr. Cooper's new Novel, entitled 'The Water Witch; or, the Skimmer of the Seas.'

THE *Couquette* lay with her head to seaward, her stern necessarily pointing towards the land. The distance to the latter was more than a mile, and the direction of the ship's hull was caused by the course of the heavy ground swell, which incessantly rolled the waters on the wide beach of the Island. The head gear lay in the way of the d.m. view, and Ludlow walked out on the bowsprit, in order that nothing should lie between him and the part of the ocean he wished to study. Here he had not stood a minute when he caught, first a confused, and then a more distinct, glimpse of a line of dark objects advancing slowly towards the ship. Assured of the position of his enemy,

he returned in-board, and descended among his people. In another moment he was again on the fore-castle, across which he paced leisurely, and to all appearance with the calmness of one who enjoyed the refreshing coolness of the night. At the distance of a hundred fathoms the dusky line of boats paused, and began to change its order. At that instant the first puffs of the land breeze were felt, and the stern of the ship made a gentle inclination seaward. 'Help her with the mizen! Let fall the top sail!' whispered the young captain to those beneath him. Ere another moment the flap of the loosened sail was heard. The ship swung still further, and Ludlow stamped on the deck. A round fiery light shot behind the mastingale, and the smoke rolled along the sea, outstripped by a cloud of missiles that were hissing across the water. A shout, in which command was mingled with shrieks, followed, and then oar-blades were heard dashing the water aside, regardless of concealment. The ocean lighted, and three or four boat-guns returned the fatal discharge from the ship. Ludlow had not spoken. Still alone, on his elevated and exposed post, he watched the effects of both fires with a commander's coolness. The smile that struggled about his compressed mouth, when the momentary confusion among the boats betrayed the success of his own attack, had been wild and exulting; but, when he heard the rending of the plank beneath him, the heavy groans that succeeded, and the rattling of lighter objects that were scattered by the shot, as it passed with lessened force along the deck of the ship, he became fierce and resentful. 'Let them have it!' he shouted, in a clear animated voice, that assured the people of his presence and his care. 'Show them the humour of an Englishman's sleep, my lads! Speak to them, tops and decks.' The order was obeyed. The remaining bow-gun was fired, and the discharge of all the *Coquette's* musketry and blunderbusses followed. A crowd of boats came sweeping under the bowsprit of the ship at the same moment, and then arose the clamour and shouts of the boarders. The succeeding minutes were full of confusion and of devoted exertion. Twice were the head and bowsprit of the ship filled with dark groups of men, whose grim visages were only visible by the pistol's flash, and as often were they cleared by the pike and bayonet. A third effort was more successful and the tread of the assailants was heard on the deck of the fore-castle. The struggle was but momentary, though many fell, and the narrow arena was soon slippery with blood. The Boulognese mariner was foremost among his countrymen, and, at that desperate emergency, Ludlow and Trysail fought in the common herd. Numbers prevailed, and it was fortunate for the commander of the *Coquette* that the sudden recoil of a human body, that fell upon him, drove him back from his footing to the deck beneath. Recovering from his fall, the young captain cheered his men by his voice, and was answered by the deep-mouthed shouts which an excited seaman is ever ready to deliver even to the death. 'Rally in the gangways, hearts of oak!' was returned by Trysail, in a ready but weakened voice. The men obeyed and Ludlow saw that he could still muster a force capable of resistance. Both parties for a moment paused. The fire of the top annoyed the boarders, and the defendants hesitated to advance, but the rush from both was common, and a fierce encounter occurred at the foot of the foremast. The crowd thickened in the rear of the French, and one of their number no sooner fell than another filled his place. The English recoiled, and Ludlow, extricating himself from the mass, retired to the quarter-deck. 'Give way, men!' he again shouted, so clear and steady as to be heard above the cries and the execrations of the fight. 'Into the wings—down—between the guns—down—to your oars!' The English disappeared as if by magic. Some leaped upon the ridge-ropes, others sought the protection of the guns, and many went through the hatches. At that moment Ludlow made his most desperate effort. Aided by the gunner, he applied matches to the two swivels which had been placed in readiness for a last resort. The deck was enveloped in smoke; and, when the vapour lifted, the forward part of the ship was as clear as it man had never trod it. All who had not fallen had vanished. A shout and a loud hurrah brought back the Defendants, and Ludlow heeded a charge upon the top-gallant-fore-castle in person. A few of the assailants showed