

## LITERATURE, &amp;c.

## REVIEW.

*Excursions in India, including a voyage of 1200 Miles up the Ganges, &c. &c.* By Captain Skinner. 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1832. Colburn and Bentley.

Indian lands and manners have now become fashionable subjects, and gallant Captains are beginning to discover their prowess with the pen as well as in the field. A few weeks back we had to record the Adventures of Captain Mundy, who, by the way, was also sailing in kind companionship with Mrs. Meer Ali, the fair elucidator of Mahometanism; and now we have the tale of another perilous or pleasant voyage, or both, fresh from the military portfolio of Captain Skinner, with notes and narratives studing the pages like diamonds, and bearing us to the conclusion of the volume, like supernatural will-o'-the-wisps. They so far differ, however, from the last fickle luminaries, that they do not lead you after a stray light; on the contrary, the reader must come at an essential good in the information which the book unfolds, and the amusement which it administers, more particularly when we tell him that it has no feature in common with its predecessors, but abounds in matter as new as it is instructive.

The travels of Captain Skinner, however, were by no means trifling, even for a 'man of war.' Not only did he make one of numerous excursion parties in the heart of India, but is launched upon a voyage of 1200 miles up the Ganges, and gives us a various and rambling history of his visits to Merut Cawnpore, the city of Delhi, (to see which were alone worth a thousand journeys, were it only for the associations,) and many other places in the vast Empire of Hindostan, to which much interest is attached, and of which little or nothing is known. An expedition over the Himalaya Mountains to the sources of the Jumna and the Ganges—is not the least romantic or marvellous portion of the book—which may almost be called a panorama of country and character—for ever changing and yet for ever fair. Of course all narratives of this kind pretend to describe peculiar scenes and characters—and we have, therefore, only to say, that in such matters Captain Skinner uses a graphic pencil, and paints with mingled care and skill. Our extract gives an account of Delhi, before alluded to:—

Generally in the towns of the East the streets are very narrow, and little better than dark passages. In Grand Cairo, if you unfortunately meet a string of masked beauties upon donkeys, you must make a rapid retreat, or resign yourself to be squeezed to a mummy against the wall, for daring to stand in their course, if your curiosity should tempt you to do so. The Chandy Choke, in Delhi is, however, a great exception to this rule, and is perhaps the broadest street in any city in the East. The houses in it have occasionally balconies in front of them, in which the men sit, loosely arrayed in white muslin, smoking their hookahs; and women, who have forfeited all pretensions to modesty, are sometimes seen unveiled, similarly occupied. The din of so populous a place is very great, for every house seems as well furnished as a hive of bees. The population is near 200,000 souls, in an area of seven miles in circumference, which is the extent of the wall of modern Delhi. The great peculiarity of an eastern town is, that every thing is done in public: the people talk as loudly as they can, and sometimes, when engaged in unimportant matters, seem to be scolding each other in the most outrageous manner: the neighing of horses, the lowing of cattle, the creaking of cart-wheels, and the 'clinking of pewterers' hammers (for all occupations are carried on in a little open space in front of each shop), are beyond all endurance. The trumpeting noises of the elephants, with the roaring of the camels, varied occasionally by the roaring of a leopard or a cheater (which animals are led about the streets hooded to sell for the purpose of hunting), with the unceasing beat of the tin-tom, the shrill pipe, and the cracked sound of the viol, accompanied by the worse voices of the singers, are enough to drive a moderately nervous person to desperation. Among the natives of Mahometan towns there seems to be a familiarity of manner that places every one in a moment at his ease. If a stranger enter the town and find a group engaged in any amusement, he will not scruple to join it instantly, and take as much interest in its pursuit as if he had known the members of it all his life; and then, perhaps, tendering his pipe to one of the party, or receiving one from it—a sure sign of intended hospitality—sit down and relate his history with as much frankness as if he had met a brother. The houses are generally irregular in their construction, and not unfrequently curiously decorated. Different coloured curtains hang before the doors; variegated screens serve as blinds to the windows; and the custom of hanging clothes, particularly scarfs of every hue, pink, blue, yellow green, and white, on the tops of the houses to dry, make them look as gay as a ship on a gala day with all its colours flying. The clouds of dust from the number of equipages, with the insects that surround the pastry-cooks' shops, are the most intolerable plagues of all. The rancid smell of the nasty-looking mixtures that are constantly in course of manufacture before you, with the general stench of the town, is a sign that is seldom indeed that a 'musk caravan from Koten passed through it.' I think, in the Arabian Night's Entertainments, there is a story of a princess threatening to have a confectioner beheaded, if he did not put pepper in his tartlets. However despotic it may appear in this lady, I cannot help thinking it a just satire upon the pastry of the East; for to season it out of all taste of its own fundamental ingredients, is the only way to make it palatable. This cook, I think, nearly fell a martyr to the honour of his profession, and refused to be dictated to; and I do not believe any thing would induce his brethren of the present day to improve their confectionary. Kiding through the town requires much management and some skill. It is unnecessary to shout, push, and kick the whole way to warn the multitude to get out of the road. Occa-

sionally you have to squeeze past a string of loaded camels, or start away from a train of elephants; and if your horse be frightened at these last animals, which is frequently the case, it needs some ingenuity to avoid being plunged into the cauldrons, which simmer, on each side of the way, in front of the cooks' shops. The fear is mutual very often, and the elephants, in attempting to escape from the approach of a horseman, may well be supposed to throw the whole street into a fine confusion. In one of my strolls through the city on horseback, I was nearly swept away by a species of simoom, caused by the progress, through the dusty town, of some important personage travelling in state. When overtaken by such a storm, it is a long time before you can recover either your sight or position. The idle cause of all this tumult was reposing quietly in a shining, yellow palanquin, tricked out with gilt moulding in every possible direction. He was preceded by a large retinue of strange-looking beings, mounted on horses and dromedaries, and dressed in the most fantastic style. The animals were covered with scarlet housings, bound by gold lace, their bridles studded with shells; round their necks were collars of gold or silver, with little drops hanging to them, that kept time most admirably with their jingling measure. The camels were likewise adorned with bells. The riders were in large cloth dresses, caftans, reaching from their necks to their heels, open only on each side, from the hip downwards, for the convenience of sitting on horseback. These were fastened round the waist by a cotton sash, either of white or green, in several folds. The common colours of the coats were red and yellow. A cimeter hung by their sides, and they bore matchlocks upon their shoulders. A helmet, sometimes of steel, and sometimes of tin, pressed close to the head, in shape not unlike a dish-cover; a pair of jack-boots reaching to the knee, and fitting quite tight to the leg; the loose trowsers gathered above, giving to the thigh the appearance of being the seat of a dropsey; and a pair of spurs, resembling two rusty weathercocks, completed the equipment of these splendid retainers. Then following a mass of servants on foot, some naked, and some with their loins bare and bodies covered. They carried sheathed swords in their hands, and shouted out the titles of their lord, at frequent intervals, in their passage through the city. They were followed by the stud, each horse beautifully caparisoned and led by a groom; then came the elephants with their shewy trappings, gilt bowdahs, and umbrellas of gold or silver tissue. The palanquin, bearing the owner of these motely assemblages, at length appeared, and he was followed by a guard similar to the one that preceded him. At a distance these processions look very grand, particularly the elephants and their castles; but when near there is a great tawdry and ill-assorted tinsel. The horsemen of the party add greatly to the interest of the scene, by exhibiting their evolutions upon the line of their route. Some tilt at each other with their spears, and others affect to pursue, with drawn swords, the runaways of the party, who in turn, chase their followers back into the ranks. In the management of the horse, and the use of the spear, the natives are generally very skilful; but some of the irregular cavalry of the country excel all belief in these exercises. They will gallop at a tent-peg, stuck firmly into the ground, and divide it with the point of the spear, not abating their speed in the least, and I have seen a troop of men, one after the other, break a bottle with a ball from the matchlocks, while flying at a racing pace.

## FROM THE NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

## THE HOME OF LOVE.

THOU movest in visions, Love!—Around thy way,  
E'en through this World's rough path and changeful day,  
For ever floats a gleam,  
Not from the realms of Moonlight or the Morn,  
But thine our Soul's illumined chambers born—  
The colouring of a dream!

Love, shall I read thy dream?—oh, is it not  
All of some sheltering, wood-embosomed spot—  
A bower for thee and thine?  
Yes! lone and lowly is that home; yet there  
Something of Heaven in the transparent air  
Makes every flower divine.

Something that mellows and that glorifies  
Bends o'er it ever from the tender skies,  
As o'er some Blessed Isle;  
E'en like the soft and spiritual glow,  
Kindling rich woods, whereon th' eternal bow  
Sleeps lovingly awhile.

The very whispers of the Wind have there  
A flute-like harmony that seems to bear  
Greeting from some bright shore,  
Where none have said Farewell!—where no decay  
Lends the faint crimson to the dying day;  
Where the Storm's might is o'er.

And there thou dreamest of Elysian rest,  
In the deep sanctuary of one true breast  
Hidden from earthly ill;  
There wouldst thou watch the homeward step, whose sound  
Wakening all Nature to sweet echoes round,  
Thine inmost soul can thrill.

There by the hearth should many a glorious page,  
From mind to mind th' immortal heritage,  
For thee its treasures pour,  
Or Music's voice at vesper hours be heard,  
Or dearer interchange of playful word,  
Affection's household lore.

And the rich vision of mingled prayer,  
The melody of hearts in heavenly air,  
Thence duly should arise;  
Lifting th' eternal hope, th' adorning breath,  
Of Spirits, not to be disjoined by Death,  
Up to the starry skies.

There, dost thou believe, no storm should come  
To mar the stillness of that Angel-home,—  
There should thy slumbers be  
Weighed down with honey-dew, seracely blessed,

Like theirs who first in Eden's Grove took rest  
Under some balmy tree.

Love, Love! thou passionate in Joy and Wee!  
And canst THOU hope for cloudless peace below—  
HERE, where bright things must die?  
Oh, thou! that, wildly worshipping, dost shed  
On the frail altar of a mortal head  
Gifts of Infinity!

Thou must be still a trembler, fearful Love!  
Danger seems gathering from beneath, above,  
Still round thy precious things.—  
Thy stately Pine-tree, or thy gracious Rose,  
In their sweet shade can yield thee no repose,  
Here, where the bright hath wings.

And, as a flower with some fine sense imbued  
To shrink before the wind's vicissitude,  
So in thy prescient breast  
Are lyre-strings quivering with prophetic thrill  
To the low footstep of each coming ill;—  
—Oh! canst I ROT dream of rest?

Bear up thy dream! thou Mighty and thou Weak  
Heart, strong as Death, yet as a reed to break,  
As a flame, tempest-swayed!  
He that sits calm on High is yet the source  
Whence thy soul's current hath its troubled course,  
He that great Deep hath made!

Will he not pity?—He, whose searching eye  
Reads all the secrets of thine agony!—  
Oh, pray to be forgiven  
Thy fond idolatry, thy blind excess,  
And seek with HIM that Bower of Blessedness—  
Love! THY sole Home is Heaven!

F. HAWKENS.

## FROM THE LONDON NATIONAL OMNIBUS.

## THE BIRD OF PARADISE.

WE have no fairy tale to tell—no marvellous story of Eastern princes and princesses, with their good and evil genii. On our page shine no heaps of diamonds and rubies—we show not the treasury of a Haroun Alraschid but a homely English fireside. We promise not a history, big with Oriental wonders, but a plain piece of gossip, touching the family of the Browns. The beautiful bird at the top of our page, like the gray Macaws in our Zoological retreats, perches on no Arabian tree, (trickling with 'medicinal gum,'—(its exotic name, taken in contrast with our subject,) will be found to roost on a twig of vulgar English produce.

Mr and Mrs Brown were a very happy couple. At the time of our story, they had been married but three weeks; they were very happy. Mr Brown was a respectable man; he had not yet set up his gig, nevertheless, we believe we may venture to call him respectable. His heart never palpitated at the sound of the knocker—the tax-gatherer was never told to call again—he owed nothing to the poor, consequently what he gave to beggars may be put to the score of extra-paternal philanthropy. Add to this, at the period of which we write, his wedded life was in the honeymoon; a time when the smallest hearts that ever throbbed beneath the Gresham grasshopper, dilate and wax to the magnitude of pins' heads; when the most money-getting face is half uncorded into smiles, and even such as have heretofore been accustomed to crawl, feel as if 'wings at their shoulders seem to play.' In this blissful state was Mr Brown; the green trees never looked so green to him; the sky, whenever he had time to look at it, never looked so blue; the water below Richmond Bridge absolutely sparkled, and the swans thereon disporting, seemed bigger, and even something prettier, than geese. Mr Pope's willow tree, pointed out by the *genius loci*, from Eel-pie Island, and gilded by the silvery beams of Mr Brown's honeymoon, was a thing not to be forgotten for a week—if fact it was an evergreen in the landscape of Brown's life. It is thus that love purifies our coarse, working-day clay, and doubling our charities of life, and giving a keener edge to our perceptions, makes us inhabit a realm of pleasure and beauty—that is, as long as we are wise enough to learn wisdom from our feelings, by letting them fly abroad, to banquet like bees on the honeyed sweets scattered profusely about us. Or is this—but whilst we rhapsodize, we lose Brown. The wedded couple returned to the metropolis. The pastoral days were over, and business, stern business, came striding on. However, the Worshipful Company of Stationers, to which body Mr. Brown owed himself but too proud to belong, were about to give a ball. Of course the wives, widows, daughters, and grand-daughters of the fraternity were to cast a lustre on the solemnity, to many of whom the new-made Mrs. Brown anxiously looked for new acquaintances. Great preparations were made for the fete. 'I tell you, my love, the thing is too dear!' Mrs. Brown made no oral answer, but she gently protruded her lips, and her eye—she had very pretty blue eyes—darkened. This was her first act of matrimonial rebellion, and, what is strange, she never forgot it: how many cannot for the life of them remember the date of the first domestic insurrection; like the little beginnings of mighty states, they are lost in