

LITERATURE, &c.

REVIEW.

A Three Month's Tour in Switzerland and France. Illustrated with Plates. By the Rev. William Liddiard. pp. 263.—Smith and Elder.

Switzerland is a country on which much has been said and written, and yet it can never have sufficient justice done to its beauties. Independent of its claims to the possession of some of the most beautiful scenery in Europe, it has claims upon our attention for the historical associations connected with its name and memory. Morgarten is their Thermopylæ, and it is hallowed by the glorious and successful struggle made by the brave and determined Switzers for the independence of their country. Here the two-handed sword dealt its work among the throngs of their invaders; and with no armour, save their courage, and no assistance, save the goodness of their cause, there they beat back the tyrant and his followers from the hallowed sanctuary of their lakes and hills. There in other times the cantons of Uri, Schwitz, and Underwalden, entered into that solemn league and covenant, whose object was the restoration of their country from the tyranny of its rulers to the possession of that freedom which was the birthright of its children. There was the country of William Tell, and in the possession of him of all that belongs to true patriotism and a perfect love of liberty.

Born in their wild and picturesque country, and breathing the very air of heaven on their native mountains, it is not to be wondered at that their sentiments should be exalted, and their natures of that high character worthy of their birth place. The Swiss thought it as likely that their mountains should bow down at the command of a despot, as that they themselves should be thought so capable of so base an act, and those feelings, associated with the remembrance of the achievements of their fathers, kept up that pure spirit of independence within their breast which kept them from slavery and bondage. In peace, among the grandeur and beauty of their mountain-homes, would they dwell with all the world, till some neighbouring tyrant, supposing that their inactivity in warlike pursuits gave evidence of a degeneracy in their natures, marched with all his armed slaves into their valleys to subject them to his rule; then the dormant spirit of freedom rushed out from their mountain dwellings, and with the overwhelming force of an avalanche, swept before its progress every record of tyrant and of slave.

The 'Three Month's Tour' is written in a lively and amusing strain, evidently by a person possessed of a taste for the sublime and beautiful of nature, and besides is embellished with several lithographic views of picturesque scenery from drawings by the Author. The following is a specimen of the Author's manner:—

'A gentleman, to whom I was introduced at Lauterbrun by Mr. B——, Lord G——, a Roman Catholic Nobleman of high respectability, who was travelling the same way, only by a different course, intending to proceed to Grindelwald by the Valley of Zweylutchen, a road which is perfectly accessible to a CHAUBANC, had intimated to me the nature of the road I was about to take, accompanying his information with some precautionary admonition, for which I was much indebted, offering, at the same time, to relieve me from my carpet bag, the only incumbrance I was now saddled with. This polite offer, for which I had to thank my fellow-traveller, and which was accompanied with a promise to bespeak beds for us at Grindelwald, I most gratefully accepted; and after a parting request that we would not break our necks, his Lordship took his course through the Valley, whilst we pursued our more perilous way over the Alp to Grindelwald.

'That our road was of a somewhat dangerous description I had little doubt,—the almost perpendicular hills around us assured me that it must be so,—an assurance I was the more confirmed in by the total absence of every thing that bore the semblance of a road, save the ground we immediately occupied a few yards before us; one thing was certain, however carefully concealed, that it must be steep, circuitous, and narrow. A very little time proved that my conjectures were right,—the angles which we turned were sometimes very abrupt; but the danger was guarded against, being planted out from the view, in most cases, at first, so that the traveller is fairly cheated in the commencement of his ascent. As he advances, the road becomes narrower, more precipitous, exposed, and dangerous. The beauty of the surrounding scenery, however, by its attraction, helps to make him forget that he is travelling within an inch or two of destruction.

'The pathway, for the first hour, over the Schucken, requires some nerve, and more so from those who trust to the sagacity of the mule, in preference to their own. It was not till after I had reached a very considerable height that I began to consider the position I was in, or rather, till suddenly casting my eyes below, I was made sensible that I was on the brink of a precipice that seemed nearly fathomless,—where destruction must unavoidably follow a false step of the mule on which I had mounted; and which, devoid of all fear, was pushing forward at the full stretch. With all the confidence I was told I might place in these animals, I could not, however, banish my doubts and fears, which, being able no longer to resist, I at length yielded to, and dismounted.

Mr. B——, who was just before me, trusting to his own BAYON, no sooner saw me dismount than he took my place, assuring me I should be glad enough to resume it before we arrived at the end of our day's journey. At present I did not envy him his seat, preferring to trust to my own feet and my spike-staff. We were both of us at our ease: Mr. B——, as much so as myself. I be-

gan to enjoy the scene, and to look around me with a sense of security that enhanced my enjoyment.

My thoughts and eyes were fully occupied with the scene around me.—now looking with delight at the luxuriant growth of the trees near to us—and now gazing with awe, and a new-felt mixture of delight, at the unexplored glacier mountain which seemed immediately before us, when the sound of not very distant vocal music struck upon my ear. The sound, the place, the nature of the music, wild as the tract we were traversing, with which it was in perfect keeping, enchained me for a moment to the spot. It seemed like the music of another sphere; nothing, however, was to be seen; it evidently was nearer the skies than we were. Still all was as mysterious as captivating, till the guide, who no doubt, had observed how much it had attracted my notice, told me, with a smile, that it came from above; in plain matter of fact, that the music was the native music of the country we were travelling through; an assurance, the truth of which was soon proved, by the appearance of two or three females, the songstresses, who presented flowers to us, and requested at the same time, to be remembered by their auditors, whom they had seen approaching, though unseen themselves by us, whom they thus welcomed to their hills. A few BÄTZEN seemed amply to satisfy them not only for their vocal exertions, but for the wild flowers, which they appropriately presented to us before we bid them adieu, with our thanks, and now, in our turn, left them below us.

The sound of their wild airs remained in my ears long after the fair performers had ceased to be visible. I could scarcely persuade my guide that this was absolutely the case. But these hills, like the Enchanted Island, described by Shakspeare, are full of these 'sweet sounds,' which from the nature of the place and its echo, are heard at a great distance. Nothing could have been substituted in the way of music for these wild strains, which were so completely in keeping with the scenery around. Though singularly rude, yet the sounds were perfectly harmonious, apparently easy to imitate, as I thought at first, but by no means so imitable as I supposed; a strange, but to me most pleasing mixture of what are called head and chest notes, rising from a low note to its octave; requiring a very correct air and melodious voice, and calculated to be heard at a very great distance, it seemed as if the music had been borrowed from the mountain echos.

The singers at first appear as if they were only trying their voices in thirds, fifths, and octaves, and this at length seemed to be followed by a regular air, in which the several singers each took their part, but all in perfect counter-point, constituting a sort of peculiar and free style, adapted to the mountains; of which the component parts like the well-known Tyrolean song of freedom, were lightness, sweetness, and freedom. I never have heard a Swiss or Tyrolean air since that it did not at once bring me back, in a sort of dreamy imagination, to these captivating, paradisaic hills.

'One of those passing rainbow dreams,
Half light, half shade, which Fancy's beams
Paint on the fleeting mists that roll
In trance or slumber round the soul.

MOORE.

The following is a remarkable adventure which happened to a fellow traveller.—

'Weary with a long day's ramble after losing his way, he arrived very late at an hostelry, of a very humble and suspicious appearance, where he not only found a very scanty supply of food, but, what is worse, was told he could not have a bed, unless he could be contented to take up his night's rest in a room, which, upon inspection, appeared already to be fully occupied, and by a description of persons, judging from their appearance, not of the most eligible kind. In fact the only spot in which he found there was any prospect of reposing himself, after the fatigues of the day, was a rather spacious room, the floor of which was already strewn with travellers, many of whom to judge from their appearance (to say no worse,) were likely to prove unwelcome, if not dangerous, bed-fellows. The wanderer as well as the pauper, often encounters strange bed-fellows. There was no resource, and at length after procuring a large blanket, he took up a recumbent posture on the floor, taking care, at the same time, to have his pistols within his reach.

'He had been now sometime stretched at length, not much at ease, and after tossing and turning, was about to add to the subjects of the heavy but levelling God, when he observed the door of the room open slowly, as if directed by some cautious person afraid of giving alarm. His first movement was to put his hand upon his pistols, determined, at all events, not to die unrevenged. He had presence of mind however, to lie still, watching at the same time the motions of the door, and especially of him who opened it, and who was now slowly and cautiously entering the apartment.

'In one hand he beheld a lantern, while the other grasped what appeared to be a dagger. He had now advanced a considerable way in the room, and was in the act of examining, in an easy manner, which betrayed no small fear of discovery, the different persons who met his view on every side, seeming to look for some stray article or appendage of the sleepers, which he might, unperceived make his own.—He had not, however, yet done more apparently than slightly investigate the physiognomy of some of the sleepers; making his way, not by rapid, but long and silent strides, towards that part of the apartment where he himself reposed, not as you may suppose on a bed of roses. He was now close upon him, as if he had selected him as the object most likely to repay him for a more minute inspection; occasionally, however, he observed he cast an eye backward towards the door, as if afraid of interruption in that quarter. In one of these intervals he grasped his pistol, not knowing how soon he might have to defend himself from the marauder; when all at once he beheld him take another direction, and at length open the door of a cupboard. That which he imagined at first to be a dagger, proved to be a carving-knife: the next moment (the interval was scarcely perceptible) he saw the lean robber in the act of—What? I think I hear you say—in the act of slicing, then of devouring voraciously, a huge piece of bacon, which he had cut with no unsparring hand, from the main stock, to which the cupboard had proved no protection. After having satisfied the irresistible impulse of hunger, he retired by some entrance at which he entered, loaded with an, as yet untasted, and large piece reserved, no doubt for a more private discussion. On mentioning the circumstance the following morning to 'mine host,' he recognised in the swinish robber, his son Pedro, whose appetite he described as being of that inordinate and insatiable nature, that nothing could satisfy.'

FROM THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

A STRAY LEAF IN THE LIFE OF A GREAT NOVELIST.

'CONFOUND this gout!' pettishly exclaimed Mr. Walton, as he rose from his solitary dinner. Now, Mr. Walton was a *bon vivant*, a humourist of the first fashion a tale-writer (it must be owned) of the first talent, and one whose society was so constantly courted, in all dinner-giving and literary circles, that a lonely meal was a most unusual and unpleasant occurrence to him.

'Well,' continued he, 'I must, per force, content myself with another day of sofa and Quarterly;' for Mr. Walton ranked among the most devoted adherents to the Quarterly creed of politics. Scarcely had he uttered these words in a tone, half peevish and half resigned, when a servant handed him a letter, bearing an official seal of stupendous dimensions, and marked in the corner, 'private and confidential.' Walton eagerly opened the envelope, and to his great dismay, learned that the great man on whose smiles he lived, and to whose fortunes and party he was attached (by a snug place,) required immediate information on subjects connected with our naval establishments, into the expenditure of which, the great political economist, on the opposite side of the house, intended to make certain inquires in the course of a night or two. Mr. Walton was requested, not to say commanded, to see the commissioner at Portsmouth as speedily as possible, to investigate facts and report progress on his return. It was at the same time delicately hinted, that the expenses of this important mission, would be defrayed by the writer from that convenient and ever-open source, the public purse. 'A journey of seventy-two miles when I'd resolved upon quiet; but in the service of one's country, when it costs one nothing! Well; I must forget the gout, or lose my—— Hang it! I can't call on the commissioner in list slippers. Travers! step up to Hoby's, and tell him to send me a pair of boots, somewhat larger than my usual fit; and take a place in the Portsmouth coach for to-morrow morning; 'tis too late to night for the mail—but d'ye hear? not in my name, as I travel incog.' Walton made the few arrangements for so short an absence from town, retired earlier than usual to bed, was horrified at the imperative necessity of rising before the sun, found himself booked by his literal servant as 'Mr Incog,' had the coach to himself, and at six o'clock in the evening, alighted at the George, in High-street. Travelling without a servant, and with so scanty an allowance of baggage, he was ushered into the coffee-room, of which he found himself the sole occupant, asked for the bill of fare, and was served with the usual delicacies of a coffee-room dinner; cold soup, stale fish, oiled butter, rancid anchovy, flabby veal-cutlet, with mildewed mushroom sauce. Cape and brandy, doing duty for sherry, and a genuine bottle of Southampton port, so well known by the seducing appellation of 'Black strap.' All these luxuries were brought him by a lout of a boy, who looked more like a helper than a waiter. 'Well,' thought Walton, 'the sooner I complete my mission the better. I could not bear this sort of thing long. How far is it to the Dockyard, waiter?' 'I don't know; master can tell; its no use your going there now, the gates be shut.' 'But I wish to see Sir Henry Grayhurst, the commissioner.' 'He be gone to the Isle of Wight with his family, so I heard master say.' 'Is he expected back soon?' 'Lord, Sir, how can I tell? if you ask master he do know.' 'Pleasant and intelligent youth!' sighed Walton, 'I'll put him into my next sketch.' 'Well, I've had the bore of this day's journey for nothing, since the man I come to see is absent, as if on purpose to oblige me. How extremely agreeable! I must 'ask master' then. Tell the landlord I want him.' 'Master and missus be gone to the play; it's old Kelly's benefit, and they do go every year.' 'The play! there's comfort in the name; anything is preferable to this lonely, gloomy coffee-room. Send the chamber maid to me.' An old woman with a tin candlestick, led the way to a small inconvenient room up numerous flights of stairs, not evincing the slightest sympathy with the limp of our traveller, who, by the way, had nearly forgotten his gout in his annoyances. She assured him that all the best rooms were engaged. What soothers of irritated feelings are soap and water! Walton washed his handsome face and aristocratic hands, (novelist-ink had not spoiled them) got rid of his dusty travelling suit, put on a capacious king's-stock with flowing black drapery, and a well-regulated and well-braided Stultz. His ready-made Hoby's he consigned to 'boots,' having assumed the *bon à soi* and easy pumps. Leaving word that he should require something for supper, he bent his steps to the theatre. The acting was sufficiently bad to amuse him, and at a moment when the attention of the audience was directed to the closing scene of the tragedy, and the ladies of the Point were weeping at the distress of the lady in point, the door of an opposite box was opened by the identical lout who had waited on him at dinner. The lad making his way through a boxful