

LITERATURE, &c.

REVIEW.

British America. By John M'Gregor, Esq. In two volumes. Edinburgh: W. Blackwood. London: T. Cadell.

At Cape Rosier, which is considered its mouth, the St. Lawrence is eighty miles broad; and at Cape Chat, 100 miles up the stream, it is still forty. Even at the point where its waters are perfectly unaffected by the sea, it is still twenty-two miles broad, and twelve fathoms (that is, 72 feet) deep. Nay, 100 miles below Quebec, it is nearly 300 feet deep, for its depth increases upwards.

One pledge for the future prosperity of Canada is found in her mineral wealth. Even petalite, the rarest of fossils, is yielded by her soil, (near York,) iron of the best quality, copper, lead, tin, plumbago, &c., and all the metals predominant in the useful arts, have been found already; nor do we recollect a single mineral which is indispensable to manufacturing industry, except only coal, which has not been discovered in Canada. Salt and gypsum are now produced in abundance. Even coal would probably have been detected long ago, had the woods been less infinite. And, should it even happen that coal were never detected, still the vast coal-fields in the neighbouring province of Nova Scotia (to say nothing of what might be had from New-Brunswick, or Cape Breton, or Nova-Scotia,) are known to be sufficient for the consumption of all America, through very long periods of time. * * *

With purposes so important, and a duty so paramount, calling upon us to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of these North American colonies, we have national reasons to be thankful to Mr. M'Gregor for the immense labour with which he has brought together the materia requisite for placing our public counsels in this great chapter of policy upon a sound basis. The government at home, and their representatives in the colonies, are under the greatest obligations to him; and, next after them, all those who are now speculating on emigration. There is a separate chapter of valuable advice to this class; but in fact every page of both volumes may be considered as specially addressed to them, since the innumerable details which are collected upon every new settlement, its situation, advantages, difficulties, wants, and ultimate prospects, compose a vast thesaurus of information far more accurate and comprehensive than any which an emigrant could ever hope to gather for himself by many years of personal travel. Sitting by his own fireside in England, he may now make up his plans; he may assort the materials of the baggage which he may find it prudent to carry with him; he may, in short, make every possible provision for his future comfort and prosperity, in a higher degree of perfection than would formerly have been possible, until after a long, painful, and very costly experiment on the different modes of colonial life, conducted at his own peculiar risk.

Never was there a time when counsel and assistance of this quality was so clamorously called for. Emigration from this country is going on by gigantic strides, and in no very distant period the advanced posts of civilisation will have established a communication between the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Pacific Ocean. Mr. M'Taggart, an engineer employed on the Canals of Canada, and therefore little liable to the reproach of countenancing visionary speculations, declares that "steam-boats may go up from Quebec to Lake Superior ere three years from this time," when they will pass through the notch of the Rocky Mountains, and be locked down the Columbia to the Pacific Ocean. The town of Nootka, on the Sound of that name, from mere advantages of situation, he believes "is likely to be as large as London; as the trade between it and the Oriental world may become wonderfully great in a short time. Then, when the steam-packet line is established between Quebec and London, as it soon will be, we may come and go between China and Britain in about two months."

These are magnificent prospects, but not more so than we have reason to think warranted by the mere statistics of the case. The route of a prodigious commerce will be across these regions. They will soon be inundated by a vast population. Christian temples, cottages rich in comfort, and the best gifts of civilisation, colonies rising rapidly into centres of knowledge and power; these elements of a potent national confederation, will speedily rise to dispossess the roving deer of their pastures and the wolf of his den. Rising under the auspices, and forwarded by the assistance of Great Britain, composed also in a very large proportion of a population originally British, they will inherit our language, literature, and historical recollections, under wise treatment at this time, they will look with gratitude and veneration to the mother country, and, from habits of ancient intercourse, will continue to strengthen our foreign policy as allies, long after that era when the maturity of their own development shall have silently dissolved their allegiance to the British crown.

These great prospects are not in every part dependent upon our justice and wisdom. In defiance of us, and all that our folly can accomplish, Canada, with the far-stretching countries to the west, will eventually compose a great empire. But we can do much at this crisis to forward that consummation, and to found lasting remembrances favourable to our own foremost interests. And considering the critical moment at which the present work has come forth; considering also the fulness and remarkable accuracy of the information which it offers to our governors at home, we believe that few men in this generation will prove greater benefactors to our vast establishment of North American colonies than John M'Gregor. And when it comes to be superannuated; as that can happen only through the rapid progress of the colonies to which it relates, we are sure that no man will rejoice more in a depreciation of his labours so produced, than the able and patriotic author.

FROM A NEW WORK ENTITLED TALES OF GLAUER SPA.

THE Lady Blanche was still in the secure asylum of the Abbey of St. Genevieve. Here in safety, and in tranquil devotion, she might have worn out life, had not that fire been kindled in her bosom which, when once lighted, cannot be extinguished without making a waste and ruin of the tenderest affections. Heavily as her forebodings weighed on her heart, she could no more envy the calm safe sisters of the monastery, than the

living, feeling, throbbing form can envy the mute cold statue. The storm might sweep away her last hope, but who that dwells in the land of blossoms, fruits, and hurricanes will exchange with the natives of the safe and frigid north! Even so thought Blanche, while every day was bringing some agitating rumour from the scene of conflict. By the latest accounts the hostile forces were not far from the valley-lands, overlooked by the abbey. The emperor was at the head of his army, and at the approach of the great sovereign, Pepin's forces were actually diminishing.—Still he kept the field without any apparent abatement of activity. Affairs were in this position, when at an early hour of the morning, the repose of the abbey was disturbed by a rumour of the near approach of the hostile armies. The abbess with her nuns, according to the letter of her duty, hastened to mingle with her matin prayers, petitions for the downfall of rebellion. Blanche with her faithful Ermen, stole to a tower of the abbey, where she was destined to endure what a martyr might suffer at the stake, who had a threefold portion of life and sense in every nerve.

The valley, or glen, if it might so be called, broken as it was at intervals into ridges and abrupt descents, was encompassed by hills, and intercepted by a narrow, deep, and impetuous stream, with precipitous and impracticable banks, which were connected by a single plank bridge thrown across the stream, where it dashed over a ledge of rocks. At the eastern extremity of the valley, on a declivity, stood the valley, overlooking the domain attached to it—its garden, farms, and the whitewashed cottages of its artisans which were clustered together at the extreme opposite, under the shadow of the hills that appeared there to wall in the valley, and were only separated where the bold little stream had forced its passage. The peace of ages was for the first time to be broken in this sylvan scene, where even now the stillness was so profound that the chirping of the cricket, and the rustling of the fallen autumn-leaf, under the squirrel's fleet foot, might be heard. The trees, save where the firs glittered with dewy webs, where stripped of their summer glory; but, like a youthful face, 'touched, not spoiled' by grief, they looked cheerful in their adversity; glittering dew-drops studding their branches, and the glossy bark brightening in the flush of the rising sun. The stream that leaped and 'danced to its own wild chime,' was fringed with the last gay flowers of autumn—those bold little heroes that hang out their colours even on the very frontiers of winter. The windings of the stream, far off among the distant hills, were marked by the light warm mist which rose from it, giving a bluish tint to the atmosphere, and nearer, and immediately under Blanche's eye, settled in dense fog, over the coves, or rolled up the mountains in fleecy clouds.

Scarcely had Blanche and Ermen taken their stations in the tower, when the silence was rudely broken by the braying of a war-trumpet that pealed over the hills; the trampling of horses followed; and the prince, at the head of his gallant followers, were seen descending rapidly to the valley. His war-cry was shouted and answered by the clamour of the hostile army, that appeared to Blanche like birds of evil omen, darkening the opposite plain. As the prince had the inferior force, it was of vital importance to him to command the passage of the bridge; and he gained it by so rapid a movement that Ermen had scarcely time for an exclamation, before he seemed to be disposing his force about it, so as most effectually to repel an attack.

'What means that?' said Blanche, pointing to a standard-bearer. 'That surely is the banner of my father's house. A fiery sun emerging from a cloud, on a field of white.' 'But, look, my lady, close beside it, at the knight in black armour, with the black plumes. It is your father in shape and bearing, with a little stoop of the shoulders, as if he had some added weight of years; but otherwise the same.' 'Ah, Ermen, our fancies cheat us; it is the banner that has conjured up this image to your memory. It is an evil augury, this banner of a fallen house.' 'Think not of auguries, my lady, fortune is on the side of the prince. See how gallantly he rides. Any one may see he was born to rule, though his poor mother did stand on the Emperor's left side. Now he salutes his soldiers. Ha! hear their acclamations—God bless him! he had always the hearts of the commons. Heaven and all saints stand by him, I say, be he right or wrong!' The 'amen' did not stick in Blanche's throat tho' conscience would have kept it there; and Ermen proceeded, 'Beshrew me, if I think it handsome in the abbess and her nuns to be throwing their prayers into the scale of the strongest; they ought to stand aside and let 'em have fair play.' Whether Ermen meant that Heaven or the Abbess should not interpose, it is difficult to say; an untouched conscience is very docile—she probably had some secret misgivings of the righteousness of the Prince's cause, and preferred there should be no appeal to a celestial tribunal.

The manœuvres of the two armies continued for some time without an assault from either party. The empe-

ror had not yet arrived on the field of battle. Meanwhile the forces on both sides were concentrating at the bridge. The Prince had concealed a reserved corps behind a hill in his rear, in order by his seeming weakness to tempt the enemy to the perilous passage of the bridge, where their numbers would rather embarrass than aid them. They perceived the disadvantage at which they must attack, and hesitated to encounter it. 'Ah! said Blanche, it is a proud sight to see their steeds prancing, their banners and pennons flying, their lances gleaming in the sun, and those gallant knights unbleaching before the face of death, if we could forget what they may be before the sun sinks behind yon hill. They forget it, my lady, or they would be as very cowards as we women are. I have seen these lordly men who throw down their lives on the battle-field as if it were but the cast of the dice, I have seen them shrink from the twinge of the tooth-ache, and, if death did but peep at them through the curtains of a sick bed, their hearts would die away within them. But they have a brute's instinct to fight, and when that is roused they forget pain and death, and all that comes after. Truly, I think, after all their boasting and blustering, we women might dispute the palm of courage with them, for we bravely meet and triumph over those natural enemies of our race, pain and poverty, and death, which Heaven has made it our necessity to encounter: while they, for the most part, are only brave in meeting dangers of their own creation. I marvel they do not begin—they stand there on each side of the bridge, looking like wild beasts, ready to spring the moment the barrier is withdrawn.'

Ermen's wonder was scarcely expressed when some of the youngest and most daring of Charles' paladins, unable any longer to brook delay, or endure the defiance and stinging taunts of their antagonists, dashed over the bridge, were encountered, and repelled, or overthrown. Many a daring onset and gallant rescue followed. Suddenly a cloud of dust was seen rising in the distance. The oriflamme was descried. The emperor's battle-cry was heard, and at the conquering sound, his soldiers, like a pack of hounds at the voice of their master, rushed upon the bridge. They were met and driven back. Pressed forward by their own column, they became pent within the narrow space. Carnage and horrible confusion ensued—men were slaughtered in masses—horses and riders were overthrown, and when the command for retreat was given, the bridge was piled with trampled, struggling, and dying men. 'See, see, my lady,' cried Ermen, 'my Lord Pepin's men toss those carcasses in the stream as if they were sheep slaughtered for the shambles. No wonder you cover your eyes; it pierces my old heart to see those bodies, that one minute ago were full of life, strength, and hope, so broken and dishonoured. God forgive them! ejaculated Blanche. 'But look once again, my lady! See how darily the knight of the black plume advances, just so my Lord Hunold would have done; he passes the bridge! See with his few followers he dashes on the retreating column.—Ah! they turn on him—now St. Denis aid him!—there goes the Prince to his rescue!' 'Heaven help us,' cried Blanche, 'he is lost! Oh! what rashness to pass the bridge! Shame on the cowards, now there are myriads against him, how they set on him—he is surrounded—his retreat utterly cut off! Blanche clasped her hands, and fixed her eyes in deathless apprehension on that frightful melee, 'Ah me! Ermen, my head is giddy; I can see nothing, look if you can see him?' 'No, my lady, no.' 'Look narrowly, Ermen, do you not see the top of his plume?' 'No, no, indeed! nothing but glancing lances, and gleaming shields. What can that waving mean? they fall back! Ah, there he is, side by side with the black knight. See, they burst through the close ranks of the enemy—ha! how they trample them down. Mother Mary! how they tread the life out of them—they are already at the bridge—the black plume passes it, but ah! the broken planks fly from beneath his horse's feet. What a horrid gap he has opened for the Prince—his steed recoils—his pursuers are on him! Now, Heaven save him from fallen with his back to them! their lances almost touch him. Bravo! the leap is made—he is safe,' 'Surely' said Blanche, as her heart heaved from the suffocating pressure that was upon it; 'Surely Heaven's shield is before him.' 'And behind him too, I think my lady; and a lion's heart within him. See how the enemy seem cowering on their side the bridge, like frightened hawks, afraid to stoop to their prey; and my lord's men bless them! I see by their bearing, that each one feels as if he had the strength of ten men in his single arm. There comes a messenger to the Prince with good or evil tidings.' 'Heaven grant them good,' replied Blanche, 'but I fear, for my lord rides hastily off with him.' 'I marvel the brave paladins endure the taunts of the black plume,' resumed Ermen. 'Hark! how he dares them to follow the example he has set them. Ah! there is my lord Emperor—his spirit will not brook being thus kept in abeyance. He calls on his guards