

interrupt the silence since it heard the awful voice of the Eternal.

The celebrated lake which occupies the site of Sodom and Gomorrah, is called in scripture, the Dead Sea. Among the Greeks and Latins it is known by the name of Asphaltites; the Arabs denote it Bahar Loth, or Sea of Lot. M. de Chateaubraund does not agree with those who conclude it to be the crater of a volcano; for, having seen Vesuvius, Solfacara, the Peak of the Azores, and the extinguished volcanoes of Anvergne, he remarked in all of them the same characters; that is to say, mountains excavated in the form of a tunnel, lava, and ashes, which exhibited incontestable proof of the agency of fire. The Salt Sea, on the contrary, is a lake of great length, curved like a bow, placed between two ranges of mountains, which have no mutual coherence of form, no similarity of composition. They do not meet at the two extremities of the lake; but while the one continues to bound the valley of Jordan, and to run northward as far as Tiberias, the other stretches away to the south till it loses itself in the sands of Yemen. There are, it is true, hot springs, quantities of bitumen, sulphur, and asphaltos; but these of themselves are not sufficient to attest the previous existence of a volcano. With respect, indeed, to the engulfed cities, if we adopt the idea of Michaelis and of Busching, physics may be admitted to explain the catastrophe without offence to religion. According to their views, Sodom was built upon a mine of bitumen, a fact which is ascertained by the testimony of Moses and Josephus, who speak of wells of naphtha in the valley of Siddim. Lightning kindled the combustible mass, and the guilty cities sank in the subterraneous conflagration.—Malte Brun ingeniously suggests that Sodom and Gomorrah themselves may have been built of bituminous stones, and thus have been set in flames by the fire from heaven.

According to Strabo, there were thirteen towns swallowed up in the lake Asphaltites; Stephen of Byzantium reckons eight; the book of Genesis, while it names five as situated in the vale of Siddim, relates the destruction of two only; four are mentioned in Deuteronomy, and five are noticed by the author of Ecclesiasticus.

The marvellous properties usually assigned to the Dead Sea by the earlier travellers, have vanished upon a more rigid investigation. It is now known that bodies sink, or float upon it, in proportion to their specific gravity; and, that although the waters are so dense as to be favorable to swimmers, no security is to be found against the common accident of drowning. Josephus, indeed, asserts that Vespasian, in order to ascertain the fact now mentioned, commanded a number of his slaves to be bound hand and foot, and thrown into the deepest part of the lake; and that so far from any of them sinking, they all maintained their places on the surface until it pleased the emperor to have them taken out. But this anecdote, although perfectly consistent with truth, does not justify all the inferences which have been drawn from it. "Being willing to make an experiment," says Maundrell, "I went in to it, and found that it bore up my body in swimming, with an uncommon force; but as for that relation of some authors, that men wading into it were buoyed up to the top as soon as they got as deep as the middle, I found it, upon trial, not true."

**GENERAL ASPECT OF PALESTINE.**—The hills stand round about Jerusalem as they stood in the days of David and Solomon. The dew falls in Hermon; the cedars grow on Lebanon; and Kishon, that ancient river, draws its stream from Tabor as in the times of old. The sea of Galilee still presents the same natural accompaniments. The fig-tree springs up by the way side, sycamore spreads its branches, and the vines and olives still climb the sides of the mountains. The desolation which covered the cities of the plain is not less striking at the present hour than when Moses, with an inspired pen, recorded the judgment of God; the swellings of Jordan are not less regular in their rise than when the Hebrews first approached its banks, and he who goes down from Jerusalem to Jerico, still incurs the greatest hazard of falling among thieves. There is, in fact, in the scenery and manners of Palestine, a perpetuity that accords with the everlasting import of its historical records, and which enables us

to identify with the utmost readiness, the local imagery of every great transaction.—*Edinburgh Cabinet Library, No. 4.*

**PROXIMITIES OF ARMIES.**—We have often heard our military friends describe the positions of the armies in the Pyrenees, the French on one side a ravine, the English on the other, the French sentinels at one end of the town, the English at the other, and the inhabitants pursuing their ordinary occupations, as something strange; and Captain Cook has very happily hit off the same:—"One evening, while reclining on the parched and sun-burnt turf at the tent door, our milch goat ribbling particles of hard biscuit out of my hand, on looking around I was much struck with the beauty of the scenery; the azure sky was reddened and glowing with a variety of brilliant tints, reflected from the glare of the setting sun, whose bright rays gilded the rugged peaks of the towering and great bulging mountains which every where enclosed us. A long line of grey-coated French sentinels lined the opposite ridge, and one of their hands was playing a lively French air. In the valley below us the little active Basque boys and girls were pelting each other with apples, between the hostile armies, while the straggling and half-starved Spanish soldiers, who dared not pluck the fruit, pretended to enjoy the sport, but in reality were picking up the apples and carefully depositing them in their small forage bags. In the back ground set our tanned and veteran batman, employed in mending a pack-saddle, after a long day's forage, and casting an eye of affection towards his animals, which were tied round a stake, feeding, with ears turned back, on some ears of Indian corn. In the meanwhile my messmate was conversing with, and drawing a caricature of, a dowdy woman, from the Asturias, loaded with an oblong basket of fresh butter, with her arms akimbo, and her nut-brown knuckles resting on hips which supported no less than four short coarse woollen petticoats; from underneath these branched out a pair of straddling legs, of enormous circumference, the feet being wrapped in brown hairy skins, by way of sandals.—*Captain Cooke's Personal Narrative.*

#### THE BRITISH DOMINIONS IN NORTH AMERICA, &c.

BY J. BOUCHETTE, ESQ. 2 VOLS. 4 TO. LONDON, 1831.

Public attention, says the Literary Gazette, has of late been much directed to the North American Colonies; and the intrinsic value and political weight of these appanages of the empire has been the theme of a prolonged inquiry, and as yet undecided discussion. Emigration, and the timber-trade questions, resolved themselves naturally into those important considerations. Into the first of these subjects Mr. Bouchette enters at considerable length; and we have much pleasure in hearing from him the still increasing success of the lately founded townships in Upper Canada, and the encouraging prospects to new settlers. Among the variety of valuable information furnished by him, we should have been glad to have found his opinions, whether the tenure in seigneurie, or of free and common socage, is most advantageous, and of more immediate benefit to the provinces; and whether the dense and surplus Canadian population does not imperatively call for the creation of a new seigneurie for their location on the crown lands; as, in consequence of the unconquerable attachment they manifest for their ancient laws and customs, all attempts to distribute them in townships have been quite nugatory. As regards the advantages derived from the excessive impulse given to the timber trade, we are much pleased to catch an expression of the author's opinion in unison with our own. The chief business of the population should be agriculture, and we are quite sure that the progress of our colonies has rather been retarded than forwarded by the direction of the spare number of the laboring classes to the getting out of pine timber, and the digging for gypsum; but for these, the exportation of grain, which affords a remunerating price, would have greatly increased, and the fisheries might not have been so much engrossed by an enterprising neighbor. Mr. Bouchette's description of the topography of these provinces are penned with all the accuracy of a surveyor; and if acquainted with Mr. Galt's no less faithful sketches of the inhabitants, the reader may easily in his own mind, people the landscape. The progress of society, as rapid in these colonies as their spring vegetation, is methodically traced and described, from the first peopling of the solitude of the pine-forest, through all the gradations of improvement, to the assumption of the characters of towns and even cities, upon the same site. The genius of the mother country is distinctly manifest in many of the early advancements and infant foundations of her colonies; and we may cite as an example the numerous canals now in progress, or completed, in these provinces for the more expeditious transits of merchandise, or as precautionary defences against foreign aggression.

The state of society the author does not profess to give any account; and not being original in this particular, it is almost needless to remark, that education is another subject on which he scarcely touches. Of the portions of these volumes which relate to the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, we report in terms of commendation; but as respects those of Nova-Scotia and New-Brunswick, they do not contain much that has not been gathered from preceding publications, particularly from Mr. Haliburton's

account of Nova-Scotia, the best provincial history with which we are acquainted: We had almost forgotten to speak in terms of unqualified praise of the fidelity and execution of the views which adorn the pages: the lithography is extremely creditable to the artist. We have great difficulty in selecting a specimen for the opinion of our readers; all the striking features of a foaming fall and lake have been so frequently and so lately troubled by Captain Hall and others, that we would rather let them rest and subside in peace. Perhaps a description of Kingston, the naval arsenal, and of the flourishing settlements in the neighbourhood, finishing with a summary of the improvements in the lower (upper) province will have some little claim for freshness and variety.

The town of Kingston, the largest and most populous of the Upper Province, is very advantageously seated on the north side of the river St. Lawrence, or rather at the eastern extremity of Lake Ontario: it is in latitude 44 deg. 8 min. north, and in longitude 76 deg. 40 min. west from Greenwich. On the ground upon which it is built formerly stood Fort Frontenac, an old French post. Its foundation took place in 1783, and by gradual increase it now presents a front of nearly three quarters of a mile and in 1828 contained a population ascertained by census to amount to 3628 inhabitants, exclusive of the troops in garrison.—including the latter, and making due allowance for two years' increase, its population may now be computed at not less than 5,500 souls. The streets are regularly planned, running at right angles with each other, but not paved. The number of houses may be estimated at about six hundred and seventy. Most of them are built of stone: and many of them spacious and commodious: but very few are remarkable for the taste or elegance of their structure. An extensive wooden bridge of much solidity and beauty has recently been thrown over the narrowest part of the channel, between point Frederick and the town. It exceeds six hundred yards in length, and has materially added to the scenery of the place and the convenience of its inhabitants. The public buildings are a government house, a court house, a Protestant and a Catholic Church, a market-house, a gaol, and a hospital, besides the garrison, block-houses, government magazines, and stores. This town has obtained considerable mercantile importance within the last twenty years. wharfs have been constructed, and many spacious ware-houses erected, that are usually filled with merchandise: in fact, it is now become the main entrepot between Montreal and all the settlements along the lake to the westward. From the commencement of spring until the latter end of autumn, great activity prevails; vessels from eight to nearly two hundred tons, employed in navigating the lake, are continually receiving and discharging their cargoes, as well as the bateaux used in the river, and the magnificent steamboats that ply between Kingston, York, and Niagara, contribute largely to the lively animation of the scene. Its commercial importance must also be considerably enhanced by the opening of the Rideau canal, which will necessarily render it the emporium of the whole trade of the two provinces, whether carried on by the St. Lawrence or through the Ottawa. The harbour is well sheltered and convenient, accessible to ships not requiring more than three fathoms water, with good anchorage close to the north-eastern extremity of the town. The entrance to it is defended by a battery on Mississauga Point, and another on point Frederick, which, with the shoal stretching from the former, with only five feet of water upon it, are quite sufficient for its protection. Opposite to the town, and distant about half a mile, is a long low peninsula, forming the west side of Navy Bay. The extremity of it is called Point Frederick. Point Henry is the extremity of another peninsula, but of higher and more commanding ground, that forms the eastern side of it. This is the principle depot of the royal navy on Lake Ontario, and where the ships are laid up during the winter. The anchorage is good, but somewhat exposed to the south and south-west winds. It is very well defended by batteries and block-houses on Point Frederick, and by a strong fort on Point Henry. On the western side of Navy Bay are the dock-yard, large store-houses, ships for building ships of war, naval barracks, wharfs, and several dwelling houses for the master builder and other artificers, for whom, since their occupations have been so unremitting, it has been found necessary to erect habitations on the spot. In this yard the ships composing the present British Ontario armament were built and equipped. The construction of the St. Lawrence, a first-rate, mounting one hundred and two guns, will sufficiently prove that the power of this fleet may hereafter be increased to a vast extent. At Sacket's Harbour, the rival of Kingston as a naval depot, the maritime forces of the United States are kept. During the war large vessels were there put upon the stocks, one of which was represented as exceeding in dimensions the largest man-of-war in the British service, being two hundred and ten feet in length on her lower gun-deck. It is a fact singular enough, and well worthy of remark, that the largest armed ships in the world should thus be found in the heart of an immense continent, on the fresh waters of an interior lake, and at so remote a distance from their more familiar element, the ocean. As a rival station to the American one of Sacket's harbour, Navy Bay is entitled to every consideration, and as long as it becomes an object to maintain a naval superiority on the lake, the greatest attention must be paid to this establishment,—particularly when we observe with what care, our rivals complete such of their ships as were begun during the war, and also the measures they are adopting generally, to be enabled to contend against us, at a future period, with numerical strength in their favor,—and, in fact, the methods they pursue are well calculated to obtain the object they steadily keep in view. The conduct of an enterprising neighbour should always be narrowly observed, and a countervailing power be prepared, commensurate to the means of aggression, in the event of hostilities. The Americans build their ships much faster than we do on our side, and for this reason,—strength is the chief object with them, and if that be obtained, they care but little about beauty of model or elegance of finishing, in fact, they receive no other polish than what is given them by the axe and the adze. On the other hand, we employ as much time upon ours as we should in the European dock-yards. They are undoubtedly as strong as the Americans; but they are far more expensive, and will not endure a longer period of service. When we reflect, that ships built on this lake will not last more than five, or at most six years of actual service, it may be a subject not unworthy of consideration, whether we cannot, with some advantage to ourselves, adopt the methods of our opponents: and if we have a fleet