

LITERATURE, &c.

FROM THE METROPOLITAN MAGAZINE.

A TALE OF AN OLD HIGHLANDER.

BY THE ETRICK SHEPHERD.
Concluded.

In the interim, word had reached Captain Drummond at head-quarters, how matters were likely to end with his betrothed and his cousin. He therefore got leave of absence for a while, and posted to Edinburgh; but ere he arrived, the marriage was consummated. He had loved with all the warmth of his noble nature, and was so much affected by Barbara's deceit and ingratitude that he fell sick, and scarcely spoke or saw the light for nearly a month. But perhaps, during a part of this time, he had been studying the most ample revenge which he soon found the means of putting in practice. He conceived himself to have been exceedingly ill used; and without seeing either Barbara or the fortunate lover, he again posted to the regiment, and from thence to London. Hitherto no one had doubted that Mr. John Drummond, husband to Barbara Stewart, was the true and lineal heir to the great Perth estate. I cannot be sure that I recollect exactly the relationship, although often minutely described to me by Boig; but I think his father was uncle to James the first Duke of Perth; and on the decease of the latter at St. Germain's this John's father, the Lord Edward Drummond, assumed the title. He spent all his life in the interior of France in religious seclusion, and this John was the only surviving child of him and his wife, Lady Elizabeth Middleton, both of whom were dead, so that there could be no doubt as to his right of succession. Captain Drummond, however, saw matters in a different light. Although three or four degrees farther removed he perceived how difficult it would be for his rival to adduce sufficient evidence of his legitimacy from the interior of France, considering the secluded life of his father, and the then state of that kingdom. The Captain, seizing the opportunity, went boldly forward, and accused his rival as an imposter, and claimed the property for himself. He having the best Advocates of the kingdom, the Lords admitted the plea, and ordered the former claimant to produce the proofs of his propinquity. Mr Drummond was astonished at the news. He hastened to London, taking his wife with him, and from thence to Douay in Flanders, where he was born; from thence to Lyons, in pursuit of proper witnesses; which journey took him the greater part of a year. In the mean time Captain Drummond had instituted a keen inquiry at home, and had even brought forward those who deposed that Lady Edward Drummond never had a child; and there certainly were some letters produced which, if genuine, went far to prove the truth of the statement. The consequence was, that before John Drummond's return to England, the minds of the Lords were made up regarding the right of possession; and although they waited his arrival, it was more for form's sake than a persuasion of the validity of his claims. He comes to London at length, and produces a register of his birth from the Catholic College of Douay, but the other party prevailed in procuring its rejection, owing to its non-correspondence with other dates. He brought also plenty of witnesses, who proved his having been brought up and educated as the son of Lord Edward Drummond and of his wife Lady Elizabeth Middleton; but they proved of no avail regarding his birth by that lady, there having been counter-evidence proved which, in short, was, that after a tedious litigation, it was at last finally decided in the Court of Sessions at Edinburgh in favor of Captain James Drummond, of the Melford family, who became thereby possessed of the Perth property.

Never was a retaliation over a successful rival in love more complete than this was, as it left John Drummond and his wife totally ruined in their circumstances and deprived of their hopes. Boig went abroad with them when they went in search of evidence; and on reaching Calais on their way home, Lady Perth, as she had been styled ever since her marriage, was left behind, being unable from the state she was in to proceed further, and Boig remained with her. She was there delivered of a son; but was so meanly lodged, and left so poor, that she was obliged to borrow from Boig till he had not a sixpence left. In this wretched state was the once celebrated beauty lying, when her husband, after long absence, returned to France with the news that they were utterly ruined. But this was not the worst; her husband had published an article in some London Journal, I think a magazine, wherein he accused Captain Drummond, then Lord Perth, of the most grievous mal-practices against him,—of suborning false witnesses, and keeping back others; and altogether with charges so villanous, that they could not be overlooked. It would have been better had they been so, as uttered by an irritated, disappointed man; but the high spirit of Lord Perth would not submit to it.

He followed his relation to Calais, accompanied by Major McGlashan, of the 21st, and, after vainly endeavouring to draw from Mr Drummond a counter-statement, challenged him. Drummond refused to retract one item of what he had published, and signed with his name; and the event was, that he fought with Lord Perth, and was shot through the head at the first fire, the ball entering immediately above the right ear. The remainder of Barbara Stewart's history is too painful to relate. Poor Boig, who left her at last, having neither money nor clothes to come home with, often wept when speaking of her. With respect to the merits of the cause, I know nothing. It was Boig's opinion that his master was the true and lineal heir; and from him I imbibed my ideas. He always admitted, however, that Captain Drummond, then Lord Perth, was an excellent man, a gentleman of high honour and integrity,—indeed greatly superior to the other in every respect; but never that he was the proper heir. Never was retaliation on a deceitful lover visited home with such an overpowering intensity.

FROM THE NATIONAL OMNIBUS, PUBLISHED IN LONDON.

REVIEW.

Memoirs of the Early Operations of the Burmese War, Addressed to the Editor of the United Service Journal. By H. LISTER MAW, Lieut. R. N. London, 1832.

THE Burmese War is a subject which can never be uninteresting. Few of those who engaged in it returned without a budget of anecdotes and incidents, sufficient to have made any memoirs readable, and some perhaps important. The present production is both to a certain extent—Readable, because it embodies in a narrative full of incident, military, naval, national, and peculiar information, and gives something like a graphic sketch of the persons and dwellings of the Burmans, together with notes on their manners, habits, and institutions. Important, because it contains opinions which are worthy of pretty general consideration. We shall not attempt to enter into a review of a work originally intended as a magazine paper, and now only extended by accident to its present size and shape—it will be enough to say, that it is a lively and pleasant memoir, written without pretension by an individual whose profession is sufficient to excuse any want of science in the wielding of that peaceful, but often powerful instrument, the pen. Lieutenant Maw, we have every right to suppose, must have been well acquainted with his subject, as he formerly held the appointment of naval aid-de-camp to Major-General Sir Archibald Campbell, and besides, lays great stress on the circumstance of the authenticity of his memoir. We quote the writer's description of the town of Rangoon, and the general appearance of the Burmans:

"The appearance of Rangoon, when first visited by us, was not prepossessing, although it was far from dirty. The streets run at right angles; and the houses, with the exception of some belonging to Europeans, and some of the public buildings—as, for instance, the custom-house, which was of brick—were built of wood and Bamboos, raised on piles, and thatched. It was said that the emperor did not chuse his subjects to live in more substantial buildings, lest they should convert them into castles; but the moisture of the climate was a great objection to brick or stone houses, for, if wet got into the walls they soon went to decay, and fell; one of the principal buildings gave way, from this cause, whilst I was at Rangoon. The streets were paved with bricks placed on their edges, and two roads, paved in a similar manner, led from the town to the great pagoda, which was between two and three miles distant. Along these roads the British lines were placed. Numerous pigs had been kept as scavengers at Rangoon, but in consequence of the scarcity of provisions their numbers soon decreased. There were also great numbers of Piar dogs, of which the Burmans are fond, but which remaining after their masters had gone, and being inclined to bark and bite at the heels of the new comers, were unceremoniously killed and thrown into the river.

"The trade of Rangoon, previous to the breaking out of the war, was carried on principally by a few Europeans and some Chinese. The exports were said to consist of ships built to order, teak timber, petroleum, or earth oil, dauma and stick-lack, two kinds of rosin, used I believe in varnishes or japan work, and a few Pegue horses. They received from us some India manufactures and large dogs; and crockery-ware from the Chinese. They took arms wherever they could get them, and on the arrival of any ship, the arms were taken out of her, and placed in the custom-house; until all port dues, &c. were paid; latterly, vessels trading there were reported to have made a practice of carrying arms that were not expensive, and leaving them, whereby the port dues were paid at a cheaper rate, and the Burmans were satisfied with the use they intended to make of them. Some arms stamped, and of English manufacture, were found in the custom house. When we arrived, a small frigate of five or six hundred tons burthen was on the stocks, building for the Imam of Muscat. A merchant-ship had been launched, and was fitting out; and two brigs, and some Chinese junks, were lying in the river as traders. The Chinese who were at Rangoon, were said to have been taken by the Burmans during one of their wars, and were detained to work, and to increase the population. They were amongst the greatest rogues in existence. Plunder being prohibited to the British forces, the Chinese carried off every thing in the Burmans' absence. Their houses were full of all kinds of commodities, and I believe they were the only people who had abundance.

"The appearance and character of the Burmans, the miscom-

prehension of which has probably been a principal cause of various misunderstandings relative to the war, resembles that of the Tartars or more properly the Mongols, rather than the Hindoos. The Burman, though not generally tall, is athletic, active, and cheerful; his step is firm and elastic, his carriage erect; and, although the government is in all its grades a most absolute despotism, his expression is that of independence, if not of defiance. They are said to be fond of boxing! Sober, energetic, and certainly not generally deficient in spirit, the Burman character is alloyed by cruelty in war; cunning and insolent to those below them, whilst they appeared, in some instances, to be entirely ignorant of a sense of gratitude or principle attempting to destroy those by whom their lives had been saved! This might, however, have proceeded from misconception on their part; and there were instances to the contrary, of whom I think my friend Koo was one.

"The Burman mode of warfare appears to consist rather in starving their enemies, by surrounding them with circular lines of detached stockades, the area of which they gradually diminish, so as to cut them off, than in fighting battles in the field. They are extremely expert in building stockades, one capable of containing several thousand men being thrown up in a few days, and smaller ones in less time.

"Their religion is a modification of that of the Hindoos, they worship Brahma under the name of Guadma. They do not kill domestic animals; but if any other person would kill they would not object to eat them; and they are fond of hunting wild animals, especially deer, which they shoot with match-locks,—unlike the Hindoos who will not eat what an European touches, the Burmans says, that which is good for the European is good for him, and is always desirous to share.

"The Burman emperor is absolute, and is the proprietor of all the land in his dominions, making occasional grants to his chiefs for life. The chiefs appear to be, in their turn, despotic, and to have the power of life or death over those below them. The symbols of rank consist, principally, of gold chains and gilt umbrellas; and in the formation of their houses, which must be of a particular shape, according to the order the owner is entitled to.

"There is not much distinction in dress, the warmth of the climate requiring little to be worn. A checked cotton is manufactured by them, some of the patterns of which are not much unlike the Scotch plaids. One of these cottons is usually thrown over the shoulders, and another worn round the waist and between the legs. The Burmans have a peculiar mode of twisting their hair, which is long and black, into a knot on one side, and towards the front of the head. Their arms consist of spears, swords, matchlocks, muskets, jingals, and a variety of great guns or artillery.

It will repay the reader to peruse this little work, if it were only for the interest attaching itself to such descriptions as we have quoted.

A LEGEND OF THE PLAGUE.—When the plague occurred in Dundee, early in the sixteenth century, all the infected were compelled to retire from the town, and either reside in the suburbs or bivouack in the fields without the walls. A massive fragment of the ancient wall of the town, containing the gateway of what is called the East Port, still remains in one of the streets of Dundee. Upon the top of this, Wishart, the celebrated reformer, is said to have preached to those infected with the pestilence, who lay upon the ground below. It has survived all the rest of the wall, and was lately repaired at considerable expense, out of reverence to the memory of Wishart. In a wild and secluded spot in Teviotdale, a considerable mound of earth is shewn, under which, it is said the plague was buried. There is a singular and awful distinctness in the tradition connected with this spot. It was originally, say the people, a cottage, which contained the large family of a poor shepherd. At the present time, no trace of a place of habitation is discernible; it is a plain ordinary-looking hillock, upon the surface of which the sward grows as green, and the field daisy blooms as sweetly, as if it were not, what it is, the tomb of human misery and mortal disease. The plague was introduced into this house by a piece of finery which the shepherd's wife purchased from a wandering pedlar, and wore for some time upon her head. She was speedily seized with the dreadful distemper, and took to her bed. Some of the children also beginning to feel affected, the shepherd himself went to the nearest farm house to seek assistance. The inhabitants of this place alarmed in the highest degree for their own safety, rose in a body, and, instead of attempting to relieve the infected family, spread the intelligence to the neighbours, who, being equally apprehensive with themselves, readily joined them in the dreadful decision, that mercy to individuals should be postponed to a regard for the general health. With this resolution, and disregarding the entreaties of the poor shepherd, they went en masse, and, closing the door upon the unfortunate family, proceeded to throw up earth round and over the cottage, till it was buried at least five feet beneath the surface. All the time of this operation, about half a day, the inmates, aware of their fate, cried dreadfully; and it was not till a large turf had been laid upon the top of the chimney, and a deep stratum of earth deposited over all, that their wailings were heard finally to subside. The shepherd is described as having for some time gone round and round the place like one demented, uttering fearful cries, and invoking heaven to save his family, till at last, being driven away by the people, he departed from the awful scene in a state of distraction, and was never more heard of.