

LITERATURE, &c.

FLOWERS.—From a chapter on flowers, by the author of "Rank and Talent," inserted in the *Amulet*, we extract, with much pleasure, a beautiful as well as an accurate view of the intentions of Providence, in scattering over the earth those varied symbols of his benevolence:—"Flowers are for the young and for the old; for the grave and for the gay, for the living and for the dead; for all but the guilty, and for them when they are penitent. Flowers are, in the volume of nature, what the expression, 'God is love,' is in the volume of revelation. They tell man of the paternal character of the Deity. Servants are fed, clothed, and commanded; but children are instructed by a sweet gentleness; and to them is given by the good parent, that which delights as well as that which supports. For the servant there is the gravity of approbation, or the silence of satisfaction; but for the children, there is the sweet smile of complacency, and the joyful look of love. So, by the beauty which the Creator has dispersed and spread abroad through creation, and by the capacity which he has given to man to enjoy and comprehend that beauty, he has displayed, not merely the compassionateness of his mercy, but the generosity and gracefulness of his goodness. What a dreary and desolate place would be a world without a flower! It would be as a face without a smile—a feast without a welcome. Flowers, by their sylph-like forms and viewless fragrance, are the best instructors to emancipate our thoughts from the grossness of materialism; they make us think of invisible beings; and by means of so beautiful and graceful a transition, our thoughts of the invisible are thoughts of the good. Are not flowers the stars of earth; and are not stars the flowers of heaven? Flowers are the teachers of gentle thoughts, promoters of kindly emotion. One cannot look closely at the structure of a flower without loving it. They are emblems and manifestations of God's love to the creation, and they are the means and ministrations of man's love to his fellow-creatures; for they first awaken in the mind a sense of the beautiful and the good. Light is beautiful and good; but on its undivided beauty, and on the glorious intensity of its full strength, man cannot gaze; he can comprehend it best when prismatically separated and dispersed in the many-coloured beauty of flowers; and thus he reads the elements of beauty—the alphabet of visible gracefulness. The very mutability of flowers is their excellence and great beauty for, by having a delightfulness in their very form and color, they lead us to thoughts of generosity and moral beauty, detached from and superior to all selfishness, so that they are pretty lessons in nature's book of instruction, teaching man that he liveth not by bread or for bread alone, but that he hath another than an amiable life."

PHILOSOPHY OF CHEERS.—Among all the various methods of expressing satisfaction and enthusiasm, there is none more universally resorted to in Great-Britain, by at least one half (the male one) of the inhabitants, than cheers by lots of three, and its squares and cubes. Is a speech made, or a health drunk at dinner, 'three times three' or 'nine times nine' demonstrates the 'magic of a name' or the power of the oration. Cheering is the thermometer of British feeling. It never is heard but when 'the mercury is up.' Have news of a victory arrived, cheers herald the progress of the mail—three cheers welcome its arrival, and rounds of cheers echo the triumphant conclusion of every sentence of the "cheering" details. Critics, citizens, and even dandies and the gods, cheer when the king visits the playhouse. Of cheers soldiers give three, the mystical number, when they are led to battle; and sailors,—why sailors cheer at every thing! They have no other possible method of demonstrating their joy, whence ever its cause, and whatever its complexion. Joy and gladness are said to have a section of looks and language peculiar to themselves, and which can express no other emotion. With sailors, three cheers supply the place of these on every emergency. Dancing is the action of exuberant animal spirits,—singing their melody; but cheering is with us their unmodulated but more vivid indication;—unsophisticated and thrilling, natural and unaffected. It generally comes from the heart's core, and that core I deem honest in

its deepest recesses, which most warmly prompts and most feelingly echoes them. Yet there are even exceptions to this. I remember, at a public dinner given to some statesman or other, of a man, proverbially a rascal, who was so exuberant in his cheers that he amazed even a company of four hundred half-drunk political partizans!—From the *Chameleon*, a New Work, in the style of the *Annals*.

FROM THE FRIENDSHIP'S OFFERING FOR 1832.

STANZAS WRITTEN IN A CATHEDRAL.

How loud, amid these silent aisles,
My quiet footstep falls,—
Where words, like ancient chronicles,
Are scattered o'er the walls;
A thousand phantoms seem to rise
Beneath my lightest tread,
And echoes bring me back replies
From homes that hold the dead!

Death's harvests of a thousand years
Have here been gathered in,—
The vintage where the wine was tears,
The labourer was Sin;—
The loftiest passions, and the least,
Lie sleeping, side by side,
And love hath reared its staff of rest
Beside the grave of pride!

Alike o'er each—alike o'er all,
Their lone memorials wave;
The banner on the sculptured wall,
The thistle o'er the grave,
Each, herald-like, proclaims the style
And bearings of its dead,
But hangs one moral, all the while,
Above each slumbering head!

And the breeze, like an ancient bard comes by,
And touches the solemn chords
Of the harp, which Death has hung on high,
And Fancy weaves the words.
Songs that have one unwearied tone,
Though they sing of many an age,
And tales, to which each graven-stone
Is but the title-page!

The warrior here hath sheathed his sword,
The poet crushed his lyre,
The miser left his counted hoard,
The chemist quenched his fire;
The maiden never more steals forth
To hear her lover's lute,
And all the trumpets of the earth
In the soldier's ear are mute!

Here the pilgrim of the hoary head
Has flung his crutch aside,
And the young man gained the bridal bed
Where death is the young man's bride.
The mother is here whom a weary track
Led sorrowing to the tomb,
And the babe whose path from heaven, back,
Was but its mother's womb!

The moonlight sits, with her sad, sweet smile,
O'er the heedless painter's rest;
And the organ rings through the vaulted aisle,
But it stirs not the minstrel's breast!
The mariner has no wish to roam
From his safe and silent shore,
And the weeping in the mourner's house
Is hushed for evermore!

My heart is as an infant's still,
Though mine eyes are dim with tears;
I have, this hour, no fear of ill,
No grief for vanished years!
Once more, for this wild world I set
My solitary bark,
But, like those sleepers, I shall yet
Go up into that ark!

T. K. HARVEY.

POPULAR PREJUDICES.—Various erroneous opinions have been taken up, either from the assertion of others, from our own views, or from vulgar observation. Such, for instance, were the opinions once maintained, that the earth is the greater body in the universe, and placed immoveable in its very centre, and all the

rest of the visible universe, sun, moon, and stars, were created for its sole use and exclusive benefit, that it is the nature of fire and sound to ascend; that the moonlight is cold; that dews fall from the air; that the colour of an object is an inherent quality, like its hardness and weight; and that the moon, at its rising and setting, appears larger than when high up in the sky. This last mentioned opinion, although very generally entertained, is an error in judgment; for, when we measure the moon's apparent diameter, so far from finding our conclusion correct, we actually find it to measure materially less. Here, then, is eyesight opposed to eyesight, with the advantage, in one case of deliberate measurement, to ascertain and establish the real fact. With respect to the descent of dew we must, in the first place, separate dew from rain, of the moisture of fogs, and limit the application of the term to what is really meant by it, namely, the spontaneous appearance of moisture on substances exposed in the open air, when no rain or visible wet is falling. Now, here we have analogous phenomena, that is, similar appearances, in the moisture which bedews cold metal or stone when we breathe upon it; that which appears upon a glass of water, fresh from the well, in hot weather; that which appears on the outside of surface of a cold tankard when first brought into a warm room, and not rapidly called the tears of the tankard; that which is sometimes seen on the outside of water-pipes, when the external air, as in a thaw, is warmer than the lead pipes which contain the cold water, and which some might suppose had oozed through the pores of the pipe; that which so frequently appears on the side of windows, especially of crowded apartments, when the external air has been chilled by sudden rain or frost; and, lastly, that wet which runs down our inside walls when a long frost is succeeded by a warm moist thaw. Now all these instances agree in one point, the coldness of the object bedewed, in comparison with the surrounding air, or that which is in immediate contact with it.—*Herschell's Discourse of Natural Philosophy*.

THE UNFORTUNATE VISIT TO THE CATACOMBS.

The Catacombs are on the south of the city of Paris, and commence under a place called the Tombe Issoire. Nothing above ground marks the spot as a depository of the relics of the dead. It extends through all the deep and vast quarries under the city and suburbs. Since 1786, when these caverns were consecrated, the whole of the bones which had been collected from time immemorial, from all the churchyards, and lodged in the different churches, have been placed in these vaults. It is supposed, that ten generations were in this manner deposited. The population thus stored beneath the surface is imagined to be ten times greater than that of the city of Paris and the suburbs.

The first door of entrance is on the west side of the barrier D'Enfer. The descent is by a flight of steps ninety-five feet deep, which can only be descended by one at a time, and it is necessary to have torches to light the descent. At the foot of the steps you enter a gallery, out of which proceed others to the right and left, which extend over the plains of Montrouge and St. Germain. After traversing a variety of passages, you come at length, to a sort of vestibule, at the farther end of which there is a black oaken door, over which is this inscription:—Has other metes requiescent beatam spem expectantes." This is the door that opens into these awful caverns which contain the relics of millions of the dead.

It was on the 5th of August, 1822,—aye, I well remember the day as if it were yesterday,—when I consented to join a party of Mr. and Mrs. P., who were at the same hotel as myself, in Rue St. Marc, to visit these infernal regions. My poor servant Sandy, wanted very much to persuade me off this subterranean excursion, and spoke in strong terms of the horrors of such a visit, and of the danger of disease from the noxious vapours. He tried also his eloquence upon our fellow-lodgers, but all in vain. Go we would, and go we did. Poor Sandy! thou hast now become what thou hadst such dread of—a parcel of dried bones. Thy head now rests upon a lap of earth, in the churchyard of the bonnie town of Ayr, but thy heart, which was always in its right place, I have no doubt keeps its station. And where are our two other companions? Alas! they also have paid the debt of nature, whilst thy master still survives to acknowledge thy faithful services on this eventful day, as well as on many other occasions.

To proceed: we had, after descending into these dreary caverns, spent several hours in exploring such parts as are generally shown by the guides, and were resting upon some stone seats, conversing with the guide of what there was to be seen, when one of the guides raised my curiosity by his description of a skull, which had not more joint in it than had hitherto been discovered in any other. This, he said, was to be seen at some distance from where we were. Being desirous of seeing this, I proposed going with the guide who had spoke of it to inspect it, while the rest, with Sandy, my servant, should continue where they were until we returned, as they declined, on account of fatigue, accompanying me. Off, then, we trotted to the place where this celebrated skull was to be seen. The distance, however, was greater than I imagined. At length we reached the spot, and, giving me the torch to hold, he climbed up on an immense pile of human bones to reach the skull, which was carefully placed at the top. Whether it was the foundation of this pile had been mouldered, and had caused the