

superscriptions of letters in use among all ranks; for even tradesmen address each other Most Illustrious, and a letter to any gentleman scarcely ranking with an Esquire in England, is addressed as pompously as to the first peer of the realm.

Most of the nobles have a palace of their own, which goes by their name; but very few, if any, have an establishment sufficiently numerous to occupy the whole building, and many let even the 'apartamento nobile,' or second floor, restricting themselves to an inferior suite of rooms. They are proud of having a tall robust man as porter at the gate, decked out in more gorgeous livery than any of their other servants, with mustachios, a huge cocked hat and leather, broad cross-belt and hanger, and a large silver headed cane.

In Sicily every house is a palace, and every handicraft a possession; every respectable person is addressed as his Excellency, and even a servant on an errand is charged with an embassy. This attachment to ostentation is so inveterate, that the poorer nobility and gentry are penurious to an extreme in their domestic arrangements, and almost starve themselves to be able to appear abroad in the evening with an equipage, often mean, and calculated rather to indicate poverty than comfort.

All the Fine Arts are at a very low ebb in Sicily, while the mechanics are idle, and have no notion of constant work. Although there is a manifest decay in the genius of their literature, some expressive sonnets and pastoral poems of merit, with a few works on jurisprudence, ethics, mineralogy, mathematics, natural philosophy, and archæology, however disguised in diffuse and inflated language, prove that talent has not fled from amongst them; but statistics are neglected, and reviews, travels, romances, tales, plays, and other lively productions, are almost strangers to their press. Perhaps the custom of submitting manuscripts to the inspection of supervisors and censors, has contributed to clog the flights of fancy, and occasioned the suppression of many an elegant treatise; for even their 'Opuscoli, Effemeridi, Notizie Letterari,' and various other journals, have severally existed but for a short period. From the causes before enumerated, female readers are few, and writers of that sex unknown. Of private libraries there is a great dearth. Public libraries are numerous though but little attended; and foreign authors, except a favored few, (those principally German that have been translated,) are interdicted; for the least reference to freedom of opinion, in religion or politics, is sufficient to prohibit their introduction into the country. Scarcely any English works, except *Young's Night Thoughts* and *Hervey's Meditations*, are in circulation. The names of Milton, Dryden, Pope, Thomson, Goldsmith, and other British Bards, have barely pierced the gloomy atmosphere of Sicilian prejudice; and even Shakespeare was only latterly introduced to public notice, by a ballot founded on Macbeth. Scott, Crabbe, Byron, and other ornaments of the present day, have found a few admirers; some of our new works on chemistry and medicine became known and esteemed during the occupation of the island by the British troops, when many students were received as assistants into our military hospitals.

Gambling seems to be still more universal than any other pursuit; it is the inveterate vice of all ranks.

Besides the riches of her mineral and vegetable products, Sicily boasts the finest fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea. There is a destructive method of fishing practised, called the Bilancella, in which two latine-rigged vessels, with a fresh breeze, drag an immense net by means of hawsers, which draws in every thing in its course.

In eating, the Sicilians are generally temperate, though there are many exceptions; and when an entertainment is given, the guests are expected to taste of all the dishes, which are, therefore, successively handed round by the servants, after having been carved. At the feasts of the great, the head of the table is opposite the door where the servants enter, and is appropriated to the most honored of the company, while the dependants are ranged at the opposite end, around the family chaplain, who is too often the butt of the party. The meal commences with soup, which is followed by macaroni, vegetables variously dressed, and shell-fish, called "frutti di mare." The table, during the changes, remains garnished with small plates of raw ham, anchovies, olives, and fresh figs, and melon when in season; then come bouilli, huge fish, made dishes, roast meats, salad, luscious pastry, and, lastly, fruit and coffee. Wine is plentifully drunk during the repast, sometimes accompanied with 'brinosis,' a kind of toast, expressed in an extemporaneous complimentary couplet, ending with, and rhyming, either to the name of the guest, or that of the host; and, latterly, the English custom of pledging has been frequently adopted. When the dessert is finished, every one rises with the ladies, a measure that contributes greatly to prevent excess. From the jealousy of their government, they are deprived of that fertile topic of conversation, political discussion. The habit of pilfering at entertain-

ments is a singular meanness, derived from the Romans, and still in full practice, as is also that of placing good wine at the upper end of a table, and bad, or indifferent, among the dependants. The rage to excel in the size of fish for their grand entertainments, yet exists; and I have seen the late Prince of Butera, than whom nobody better understood good cheer, place a whole tunny, garnished round with mullet, like a Leviathan in the centre of his festive board.

Besides the usual fare, snails, ink-fish, frogs, hawks jackdaws, and small birds of every kind, are eaten; but macaroni, with cheese grated over it, is the standard and favourite dish of all classes; and there are not a few, even of their public characters, renowned for their prowess in its attack; a kind of honour, corresponding to that enjoyed by our five and six bottle men. Their bread is very fine, and of good quality, with the sweetish seeds of the 'gingiolina,' an indigenous Sicilian plant, strewed over it. They eat a greater quantity of salads, fruit, pulse and other vegetables than perhaps would be wholesome, were they not qualified by numerous culinary ingredients, among which cinnamon and other spices, sugar, oil and garlic form a prominent feature.

The usual drinks are light wines, lemonade and orange; beer and tea they are strangers to except medicinally. Iced creams are a favourite luxury, with which they daily regale themselves, besides drinking iced water at their meals, sometimes corrected by a few drops of zambu, a spirit distilled from aniseed.

A FATHER TO HIS MOTHERLESS CHILDREN.

Come, gather closer to my side—
My little smitten flock—
And I will tell of him who brought
Pure water from the rock—
Who boldly led God's people forth
From Egypt's wrath and guile—
And once a cradled babe did float,
All helpless on the Nile.

You're weary—precious ones—your eyes
Are wandering far and wide,
Think ye of her so knew so well
Your tender thoughts to guide?
Who could to wisdom's sacred lore
Your fixed attention claim—
Ah!—never from your hearts erase
That blessed Mother's name.

'Tis time to sing your evening hymn—
My youngest infant dove,
Come, press thy velvet cheek to mine,
And learn the lay of love.
My sheltering arms can clasp you all—
My poor deserted throng—
Cling as you us'd to cling to her,
Who sings the angel's song.

Begin, sweet birds, the accustom'd strain—
Come, warble loud and clear—
Alas!—alas! you're weeping all,
You're sobbing in my ear—
Good night—go say the prayer she taught,
Beside your little bed,
The lips that used to bless you there—
Are silent with the dead.

A Father's hand your course may guide
Amid the thorns of life—
His care protect these shrinkings plants
That dread the storms of strife—
But who upon your infant hearts
Shall like that Mother write?
Who touch the string that rules the soul—
Dear mourning babes, good night.

MRS. SIGOURNEY.

ANTS.

Among the foreign ants, we may mention a small yellow ant of South America, described by Dampier, which seems, from his account, to construct a nest of green leaves. 'Their sting,' he says, 'is like a spark of fire; and they are so thick among the boughs in some places, that one shall be covered with them before he is aware. These creatures have nests on great trees, placed on the body between the limbs; some their nests are as big as a hogshead. This is their winter habitation for in the wet season they all repair to these their cities; where they preserve their eggs. In the dry season, when they leave their nests they swarm all over the woodlands, for they never trouble the savannahs. Great paths, three or four inches broad, made by them, may be seen in the woods. They go out light, but bring home heavy loads on their backs, all of the same substance, and equal in size. I never observed any thing besides pieces of green leaves so big that I could scarcely see the insect for his burden; yet they would march stoutly, and so many were pressing forward, that it was a very pretty sight, for the path looked perfectly green with them.' Ants observed in New South Wales, by the gentlemen in the expedition under Captain Cook, are still more interesting. 'Some,' we

are told, 'are as green as a leaf, and live upon trees, where they build their nests of various sizes, between that of a man's hand, and glueing the points of them together, so as to form a purse. The viscous matter used for this purpose is an animal juice which nature has enabled them to elaborate. Their method of first bending down the leaves we had no opportunity to observe; but we say thousands uniting all their strength to hold them in this position, while other busy multitudes were employed within, in applying this gluten that was to prevent their returning back. To satisfy ourselves that the leaves were bent and held down by the efforts of these diminutive artificers, we disturbed them in their work; and as soon as they were driven from their stations, the leaves on which they were employed sprang up with a force much greater than we could have thought them able to conquer by any combination of their strength. But though we gratified our curiosity at their expense, the injury did not go unrevenge, for thousands immediately threw themselves upon us, and gave us intolerable pain with their stings, especially those which took possession of our necks and hair, from whence they were not easily driven. Their sting was scarcely less painful than that of a bee; but, except it was repeated, the pain did not last more than a minute.—*Library of Entertaining Knowledge.*

ANIMAL LIFE.

The following is a scale of the average duration of animal life from the most celebrated writers on natural history.—A hare will live 10 years, a cat 10, a goat 8, an ass 30, a sheep 10, a ram 15, a dog from 14 to 20, a bull 15, an ox 20, swine 25, a pigeon 8, a turtle dove 25, partridge 25, a raven 100, a eagle 100, a goose 100.

THE THAMES.

This river, so famed in the commercial world, derives its name from a compound of Thame and Isis, and which in process of time came under the familiar denomination of Thames. The junction was formed a little above Oxford, but the Isis now is lost in the compound term, as the river is denominated the Thames even to its very source. The banks of the Thames have long been famed for the beauty of verdure, and taste with which they are adorned. They are studded with neat cottages, or elegant villas crown the gentle heights; the lawns sweeping down like carpets of green velvet to the edge of its soft-flowing waters, and the grace of scenery improves until we are borne into the full bosom of its beauty—the village of Richmond or as it was anciently called, Sheen. Below London Bridge we have Greenwich, and other beautiful scenery of the county of Kent. The opposite bank on the Essex side is flat, and is famed for nothing but Tilbury Fort, where Elizabeth, when the Spanish Armada threatened this country, reviewed her troops, who were collected to repel the invaders.

HIT AT SCOTCHMEN IN AMERICA.

Two farmer's servants emigrated from Lanarkshire. They came to Philadelphia, and both entered into the service of one of those substantial farmers within four or five miles of town, whose tables are generally loaded with necessaries as well as luxuries, and where the farmer and his white servant eat at the same table. The one was named Sandy and the other Jock. One morning after they had been about eighteen months in their place, as they were dressing, Jock says, 'Ah! Sandy, I had an awful dream last night.' 'And what did you dream man?' says Sandy. 'Aye but it was an awful dream,' says Jock. 'And what did you dream?' says Sandy; 'did you dream you had broken your leg?' 'Far waur than that' says Jock. 'And what was it man? did you dream your mither was deed?' 'Waur than that yet.' 'And what was it ye dream'd man?' says Sandy; 'did ye dream ye was in a bad place?' 'It was waur than that yet,' says Jock. 'And what was it man?' says Sandy. 'Oh! I dream'd I was at home again,' says Jock.—*Grant Thorburn's Autobiography.*

LORD BROUGHAM.

Among the chiefs of Jeffrey's critical staff, Lord Brougham must be named with the foremost. His knowledge is extensive and his genius of a high order; no other living man knows so much; and his activity is equal to his talents. He seems to have through inspiration, more than other men acquire by study; and any one who waits on him to open up some secret in science or literature will find that he is already acquainted with it—nay, has studied it, and is prepared to instruct others in the mystery. Some acquire a smattering of many things, and, by looking wise and speaking mystically, pass for men of fine taste and deep knowledge: it is otherwise with Brougham—he has penetrated through the surface of all things; he seems familiar with the spirit and essence as well as the outward form of whatever he discourses upon—he is the ad-