

## THE LAST EVENING AT HOME.

A SKETCH.

It was evening, and I stood at the threshold of my own native home. The full moon arose bright and clear, throwing her silvery light on the face of all nature, while the thousands of glittering stars that sparkled around her seemed to pay homage to their nightly queen. Here and there might be seen a lone cloud lightly skimming its way along, which, instead of diminishing aught from the loveliness of the scene, served but to increase its beauty and grandeur. Within sat my venerable father, whose brow was shaded by the whitened locks of age; and by his side sat the companion of his youth, the sharer of all his joys and sorrows, my own dear mother. All seemed to wear an air of cheerfulness and sweet content; but yet I was not happy. I felt that soon I must leave this sacred, this enchanted spot, and go to a land of strangers; that, on the morrow, I must bid farewell to all the endearments of childhood, the associations of early youth, my native hills and vale, together with the ever welcome smile and kind voices of affectionate friends; all, all must be left for a while—and, perhaps, for ever. Never shall I forget the emotions of my bosom as I seated myself by the side of my mother, the protector of my youth, and friend and counsellor of my riper years; and, as she took my hand within hers, the tears starting from her eyes, I felt that home was a sacred spot, and a mother's love the richest treasure of earth; and then, in a tone which even now seems sounding in my ear, she pointed out to me the many poisonous plants scattered in the path of the young, the snares and devices laid to entrap and allure them to the ways of sin; and then, with all a mother's affection she entreated me to shun them—to choose those of virtue and holiness, remembering that the least false step in the life of a female is seldom, if ever, forgotten. "Therefore," said she, "conduct yourself, at all times, and in all places, with modest propriety; considering a heart free from pollution and crime of more value than the richest gems of Peru. Let your motto be PURITY and RELIGION; your guide, the HOLY BIBLE; associates, those, and only those, who regard both the laws of God and man; always letting duty govern your conduct rather than pleasure. Shun the libertine, however pleasing may be his personal appearance, or great his earthly possession; regard him as a deadly foe, but ever worship at the shrine of innocence and truth, although it may be clad in the meanest garments of penury and want.—You go, and may the blessing of God go with you. Fail not to think the eye of HIM who never sleeps is resting upon you, and beholds your every action. And if we never meet again on earth, live so as to meet me in a happier and holier state of existence beyond the tomb. There may we range the blissful fields of glory together, and I spend an eternal day in praising Him who died that we might live."

She ceased speaking—and with a heart filled with mingled emotions of sorrow and love, I sought my own apartment. But time will fail to obliterate the recollection of that evening. The earnest tone, the tearful eye, and sweet expression of my mother's countenance, are as vivid as the transactions of yesterday. Oceans may roll between us, and thousands of miles separate us, but the last night at home will never cease to be remembered.—*Lowell Offering.*

THE most sublime spectacle in the world, is a powerful mind vindicating truth in the presence of its foes, and a martyr calmly sealing his faith with his blood.

## NATURAL HISTORY.

## THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.

## HIPPOPOTAMUS AMPHIBIUS.

THE hippopotamus, or river horse, is peculiar to the great rivers of Egypt, and is one of the most formidable creatures in that portion of the world. What is said of the locality of the behemoth, Job xl. 21, is strictly true of the hippopotamus; "He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed and fens. The shady trees cover him with their shadow: the willows of the brook compass him about." This is peculiarly the case, when he is satiated with food. He lies concealed by day among the reeds on the banks of the river, or rolls his enormous bulk along its stream, or walks securely along its bed; and in the night time he goes ashore for food, and "eateth grass as an ox," and as much as would suffice for a dozen oxen.

Some idea of the quantity of food used by the creature may be gathered from the fact, that Mr. Burchell found no less than six bushels of chewed grass in the stomach of one of them. Tattius asserts that he is the most voracious of all animals: so that he devours the standing corn of a whole field for nourishment. The scriptures thus describe the monster's drink—"Behold he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. He taketh it with his eyes" (Job xl. 13, 15).

The hippopotamus is little inferior in size to the elephant. The head is very large, and the mouth unusually so. The muzzle is covered with thick bristles, and the limbs are short and massy.

The animal keeps close to the river: it never ventures from it further than is needful for the purposes of food, returning again as speedily as possible, especially if there be danger, where his covering is perfectly invulnerable to the weapons of his adversaries. It is found extremely difficult to subdue him in fair combat; and therefore the Egyptians have recourse to stratagem. They watch near the banks of the Nile till he leaves the river to feed in the adjacent fields: they then make a large ditch in the way by which he passed, and cover it with thin planks, earth, and herbage. Passing without suspicion, on his return to the flood, over the deceitful covering, he falls into the ditch, and is immediately dispatched by the hunters, who rush from their ambush, and pour their shot into his head. "He cannot," says Tattius, "be taken by any force." According to other writers, "he may be taken with iron nets, fabricated for the purpose, and when taken cannot be killed but with iron hammers, on account of the thickness of his skin."—(Paxton.)

The animal is gregarious, being found in large herds along the Nile and other rivers of Africa.—The natives from terror or superstition, take no effectual means to accomplish its destruction, or to diminish, to any considerable extent, its numbers, notwithstanding its ravages in the fields.—Sometimes the natives dig pit-falls, covered with reeds, and thus entrap a hippopotamus in its midnight rambles. It produces only one at a birth, which it immediately takes to the water. The hide, in some parts two inches thick, is made by the Africans and Arabs into whip thongs, and other articles. In the water it shows much more courage than upon land, furiously attacking boats' crews that have assailed it; frequently tearing the boat to pieces with its teeth.

The hippopotamus is well known in Abyssinia.

Mr. Salt relates that he had no sooner reached the banks of the Tacazze, a tributary to the Nile, than his attention was excited by the cry of his attendants, of "Gomari! gomari!" the Abyssinian title for the hippopotamus. At that time, however, he only obtained a momentary glance, during which he could merely observe that its action resembled the rolling of a grampus in the sea. Between the different folds of the river, which at the place alluded to might be about fifty yards across, there are pools of almost immeasurable depth, resembling the mountain turns of the north of England; and it is in these pools the amphibious giant loves to dwell. Being desirous to attack it, Mr. Salt and his party stationed themselves on a high overhanging rock which commanded one of the favourite pools, and they had not remained long before a hippopotamus rose at the distance of not more than twenty yards.—He came up at first very confidently, raising his enormous head out of the water, and snorting violently. At the same instant their guns were

discharged, the contents of which appeared to strike directly on his forehead: on which he turned round his head with an angry scowl, and making a sudden plunge, sank to the bottom with a peculiar noise, between a grunt and a roar.—They for some minutes entertained a sanguine hope that he was killed, and momentarily expected to see his body ascend to the surface. But it soon appeared that a hippopotamus is not so easily slain; for he rose again ere long close to the same spot, and apparently not much concerned at what had happened, though somewhat more cautious than before. They again discharged their pieces, but with as little effect as formerly; and, although some of the party continued firing at every one that made his appearance, they were by no means certain that they produced the slightest impression upon any of them. This they attributed to their having used leaden balls, which are too soft to enter his almost impenetrable skull. It appears from what they witnessed, that the hippopotamus cannot remain more than five or six minutes under water. One of the most interesting parts of the amusement was, to witness the perfect ease with which these animals quietly dropped down to the bottom; for the water being exceedingly clear, they could distinctly see them so low as twenty feet beneath the surface.

The following account of the killing of an hippopotamus can scarcely fail to be interesting to our reader. It is extracted from "The New Excitement for 1841," published in Edinburgh:

"We have translated the following account of the mode of killing the hippopotamus in Dongola, from the travels of Dr. Edward Kuppell, a careful observer, and a trust worthy writer. Dongola is a narrow slip of country lying on both sides of the Nile, and extending southward from 19° 43' of north lat. for about 170 miles, measured along the coast of the stream.

"The harpoon, with which the natives attack the hippopotamus, terminates in a flat oval-shaped piece of iron, three-fourths of the outer rim of which are sharpened to a very fine edge. To the upper part of this iron one end of a long stout cord is fastened, and the other is tied to a thick piece of light wood. The hunters attack the animal either by day or by night; but they prefer daylight, as it enables them better to escape from the assaults of their furious enemy. One part of the rope, with the shaft of the harpoon, the hunter takes in his right hand; in the left he holds the rest of the rope and the piece of wood. Thus armed, he cautiously approaches the animal when he is asleep, during the day, on some small island in the river; or he looks for him at night, when the hippopotamus is likely to come out of the water to graze in the corn-fields. When the huntsman is about seven paces from the beast, he throws the spear with all his might, and if he is a good marksman, the iron pierces through the thick hide, burying itself in the flesh deeper than the barbed point. The animal generally plunges into the water; and, though the shaft of the harpoon may be broken, the piece of wood that is attached to the iron floats on the surface, showing what direction he takes. There is great danger if the hippopotamus spies the huntsman before he can throw his spear. He springs forward with the utmost fury, and crushes him at once in his wide open mouth; an instance of which took place while we were in the country.

[To be continued.]

## RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

## CONGREGATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION.

We may not only learn a lesson from our adversaries, but we have allies whose example it will be wisdom to follow. The Wesleyans in England, and the Free Church in Scotland are, equally with ourselves, opposed to the wide-spreading errors of Puseyism, and to the grasping ambition of the State Church. The Wesleyans, with a practical wisdom and a greatness of purpose deserving our admiration, have sent out their project for establishing seven hundred day schools in seven years. And how did they do it? By assembling their ablest ministers and wealthiest members in London, deliberately deciding on a plan which was wise and practicable, setting a noble example, and then frankly throwing themselves on the congregations to carry out the plan. The Free Church of Scotland, in the very hour of their utmost exigency,