

MONTHLY SUMMARY.

SCIENTIFIC INTELLIGENCE.

—A newspaper announcement states that the Tea Plant has been discovered by a Chinaman (or, as some say, by an Englishman formerly engaged in the tea culture in Assam), in the United States, "covering a large area of land in the central counties of Pennsylvania;" and that tea of excellent quality and various sorts, green and black, has been made for the market by a company organized for the purpose. We are told that the agent of this company exhibits in this connexion a drawing which is recognized as representing a genuine Tea-Plant.

A specimen of the prepared tea has been shown to us; by which we recognize that this American Tea-Plant is the well-known *Ceanothus Americanus*, the *New Jersey Tea*, the leaves of which were used for this purpose at the beginning of the American revolution. Some one has remarked that the substituted beverage must have tried the patriotism of our great grandmothers; but others report more favourably of its qualities.—PROF. GRAY, in *Silliman's Journal*.

—A Natural History Association has just been established in Ottawa, which we hope will prove active and successful in advancing the interests of Natural History in connection with that interesting region. The following extract appears in one of the Ottawa newspapers:

The public meeting, called for the purpose of organizing a Natural History Association, met, according to adjournment, at the Mechanics' Institute, on Saturday evening last; and after adopting a constitution and code of by-laws, proceeded to the selection of officers, when the following gentlemen were elected for the current year:—President, A. Billings, Jr., Esq; 1st Vice-President, N. B. Webster, Esq., A.M.; 2nd Vice-President George Hay, Esq; Secretary, Thomas Austin, Esq.; Curator and Librarian, E. Vancortland, Esq., M.D.; Committee of Management: J. Thorburn, Esq., A.M.; Duncan Thompson, Esq., and Thomas Daniel, Esq.—*Com. Naturalist*.

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.

—Preparations are now making in Montreal for the celebration of the tri-centenary of the birth of Shakespeare. The St. George society has taken the initiative, and a committee is now being formed to decide on the mode and particulars of the celebration. Several propositions have already been discussed, among others those of the erection of a statue and of a competition for a prize-essay on Shakespeare and his times.

The great poet, whom Lord Jeffrey has appropriately designated as the king of English poetry, was born in a humble and lonely cottage in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, on the 23rd April 1564.

Shakespeare wrote according to Malone thirty-five plays in all, viz:—The Comedy of Errors, in 1592; Love's Labours Lost, 1594; Romeo and Juliet, 1596; Henry VI, first part, 1589; Henry VI 2nd part, 1591; Henry VI, 3rd part 1591; Two Gentlemen of Verona, 1591; Richard III, 1593; Richard II, 1593; Merry Wives of Windsor, 1601; Henry IV, first part, 1597; Henry IV, 2nd part, 1599; Henry V, 1599 Merchant of Venice, 1594; Hamlet, 1600; King John, 1596; Midsummer-Night's Dream 1594; Taming of the Shrew, 1596; All's well that ends well 1606; Much Ado About Nothing, 1600; As you like it 1599; Troilus and Cressida 1602; Timon of Athens; 1610; Winter's Tale 1611; Measure for Measure, 1603; King Lear, 1605; Cymbeline, 1609; Macbeth, 1606; Julius Caesar, 1607; Antony and Cleopatra, 1608; Coriolanus, 1610; Tempest, 1611; Twelfth Night, 1607; Henry VIII, 1603; Othello, 1604. Of these, the tragedy of Hamlet is generally acknowledge to be his masterpiece—it is a pure effusion of genius, marked by refinement of thought and sentiment. Of the character Hazlitt, the poet, says: "Hamlet is a name: his speeches and sayings but the idle coinage of the poets brain. But are they not real? They are as real as our own thoughts. Their reality is in the readers mind. It is we who are Hamlet. This play has a prophetic truth, which is above that of history. Whoever has become thoughtful and melancholy through his own mishaps or those of others; whoever has borne about with him the clouded brow of reflection, and thought himself 'too much i' th'sun' whoever has seen the golden lamp of day dimmed by envious mists rising in his own breast, and could find in the world before him only a dull blank, with nothing left, remarkable in it; whoever has known 'the pangs of despised love, the insolence of office, or the spurns which patient merit of the unworthy takes? he who has felt his mind sink within him, and sadness cling to his heart like a maldy; who has had his hopes blighted, and his youth staggered by the apparitions of strange things; who cannot be well at ease, while he sees evil hovering near him like a spectre; whose powers of action have been eaten up by thought; he to whom the universe seems infinite, and himself nothing; whose bitterness of soul makes him careless of consequences and who goes to a play, as his best resource to shove off, to a second remove, the evils of life, by a mock-representation of them. This is the true Hamlet.

NECROLOGICAL INTELLIGENCE.

—William Makepeace Thackeray was born in Calcutta in 1811, while his father was engaged in the civil service of the East India Company.

He was sent to England in his 7th year, had a view of Napoleon at St. Helena on his way, and was placed at the Charterhouse school in London. From the Charterhouse he went to the university of Cambridge, but he did not take his degree; inherited a fortune of £20,000 on coming of age; chose art for his profession; and travelled and studied for several years in France, Italy and Germany. In 1830-31 he lived at Weimar, saw Goethe, purchased Schiller's sword, and delighted in making caricatures for children, some of which he found still preserved on revisiting the place in 1853. Reminiscences of his early art studies are interwoven into his fictions, many of which are illustrated by his own pencil; but he abandoned the project of becoming a professional artist soon after his return to England. His fortune was greatly reduced by losses and unsuccessful speculations, and before his 30th year he had set himself resolutely to literature as his vocation. His progress to general recognition was slow, though from the first he gave signs of his peculiar powers. He is understood to have written for the *Times* while it was edited by Barnes, and was certainly connected with other London journals. He contributed to *Fraser's Magazine* under the pseudonyme of Michael Angelo Titmarsh, a variety of tales, criticisms, descriptive sketches, and verses, which proved his knowledge of the world, delicate irony, and mastery of a playful yet vigorous style. In this periodical appeared "The Great Hoggarty Diamond" in 1841, a thoroughly genial satire, with a tone at once of ridicule and of pathos. The establishment of "*Punch*" in 1841 opened to him a new field, and his papers in this periodical speedily acquired peculiar distinction. His first series under the signature of "The Fat Contributor," were followed by "Jeames's Diary," in which he looks at society from the footman's point of view, and "The Snob Papers," which gave to him an independent reputation as a social satirist, while they added to the success and dignity of "*Punch*." Meanwhile "*Vanity Fair*," illustrated by himself, was published in numbers (1846-48). When it began, his name was still generally unknown, but its popularity increased with every number, and at its close he was universally accounted with Dickens and Bulwer among the first British novelists. It is more strongly marked by special and peculiar genius than any other of his works, and is preeminent also in the delineation of character. Becky Sharp and Amelia Sedley, one of the impersonations of intellect without affection, and the other of affection without intellect, are original characters, thoroughly and sagaciously drawn. He had already begun another monthly serial, "The History of Penderennis, his Fortunes and Misfortunes, his Friends and his Greatest Enemy, with illustrations by the Author." He aimed in this, his second great work, to describe the gentlemen of the present age, "no better nor worse than most educated men." A higher moral tone appears in the characters of Warrington and Laura. "Peudennis" was concluded in 1850, and his Christmas book of that year was a reprint from "*Fraser*" of a mock continuation of Scott's "Ivahoë," entitled "Rebecca and Rowena." He published an original Christmas tale for the next year, "The Kickleburies on the Rhine," a clever and kindly satire on a proud and vulgar family travelling on the continent. In the summer of 1851 he lectured in London before brilliant audiences on "The English Humorists of the 18th Century," sketching the lives and works of his predecessors in English fiction from Swift to Goldsmith. The lectures were repeated and admired in Scotland and America, were published in 1853, and have a peculiar charm from the sympathetic and social portraiture of his "fellows" of the past, mingling fine thoughts and amusing anecdotes. Ten thousand copies of a cheap edition were sold in a week. His attention had been called to the wits of Queen Anne's reign by studies preparatory to the "History of Henry Esmond, Esq., written by Himself" (1852), the scene of which is laid in that era. This is the most artistically complete and the noblest in tone of all his works, while it also admirably copies the manners, sentiment, and diction of the Queen Anne period. The main characters, Esmond and Beatrix, are among his best creations—the former a strong, high-minded, disinterested, and impulsive cavalier and Jacobite, the latter perhaps the finest picture of a splendid, lustrous, physical beauty ever given to the world. It is a magnificent and sombre romance, comparing with his other works as "The Bride of Lammermoor" to the others of Scott. His third serial novel was "The Newcomes: Memoirs of a Most Respectable Family, edited by Arthur Penderennis, Esq." The characters of Olive and Ethel are less vivid than some of his others, the story lingers, but the whole is redeemed by its prevalent genial spirit, and especially by the moral beauty of the life of Colonel Newcome, and by his death in the Charterhouse, than which there is nothing more touching in romantic literature. The success of his lectures on the humorists induced him to prepare another series "The Four Georges," which were first delivered in the principal cities of the United States in 1855-6, and afterwards in London and most of the large towns in England and Scotland. The courts and characters of the Hanoverian monarchs furnished abundant occasion for satire; the third George alone, especially in the misfortunes of his last years, was discussed with forbearance and described with pathos; and the literature, society, morals, and manners of the time were briefly illustrated. Thackeray had entered himself at the Middle Temple and been called to the bar in 1848, but with no intention of following the legal profession. In 1857, one of the seats for the city of Oxford in the House of Commons having been declared vacant, he offered himself as the liberal candidate, he was defeated by Mr. Cardwell, by a majority of 67 votes. Before the close of the year he had begun another serial, "The Virginians," the scene of which is laid in the last century during the later