

third and fourth degrees of north latitude, and some grassy steppes south of the Pacaraim chain; but they are insignificant compared with the *Silvas*, which extend 1500 miles along the river, varying in breadth from 350 to 800 miles, and probably more. According to Baron Humboldt, the soil, enriched for ages by the spoils of the forest, consists of the richest mould. The heat is suffocating in the deep and dark recesses of those primeval woods, where not a breath of air penetrates, and where, after being drenched by the periodical rains, the damp is so excessive that a blue mist rises in the early morning among the huge stems of the trees, and envelopes the entangled creepers stretching from bough to bough. A death-like stillness prevails from sunrise to sunset; then the thousands of animals that inhabit these forests join in one loud discordant roar, not continuous, but in bursts. The beasts seem to be periodically and unanimously roused, by some unknown impulse, till the forest rings in universal uproar. Profound silence prevails at midnight, which is broken at the dawn of morning by another general roar of the wild chorus. Nightingales, too, have their fits of silence and song: after a pause, they

— all burst forth in choral minstrelsy,
As if some sudden gale had swept at once
A hundred airy harps.*

The whole forest often resounds, when the animals, startled from their sleep, scream in terror at the noise made by bands of its inhabitants flying from some night-prowling foe. Their anxiety and terror before a thunder-storm is excessive, and all nature seems to partake in the dread. The tops of the lofty trees rustle ominously, though not a breath of air agitates them; a hollow whistling in the high regions of the atmosphere comes as a warning from the black floating vapour; midnight darkness envelopes the ancient forests, which soon after groan and creak with the blast of the hurricane. The gloom is rendered still more hideous by the vivid lightning and the stunning crash of thunder. Even fishes are affected with the general consternation; for in a few minutes the Amazons rage in waves like a stormy sea." Vol. i. p. 147—149.

The Ocean is the next theme—its Size, Colour, Pressure, and Saltness—

Tides, Waves--Currents--Temperature. Then follow Rivers and Lakes. The phenomena of the atmosphere are briefly, too briefly detailed. Vegetation is philosophically explained, and the distribution of plants, in every part of the world, is the subject of several chapters, which are admirably written, and are replete with interesting facts. In like manner, the distribution of Insects--of Fishes--of Reptiles--of Birds--and of Mammalia, is successively presented to view. On all these subjects Mrs. Somerville furnishes the results of the most recent investigations, and exhibits the world and its inhabitants in the light of modern science. The title of the last chapter is—"The distribution, condition, and future prospects of the Human Race." This is a remarkably interesting portion of the work. Mrs. Somerville shows that while the varieties in the human family are not very easily accounted for, the unity of type is obvious, and "God has made of one blood all nations of men." The wonderful effects of civilization are expatiated on, in truly eloquent strains, and the prospects of mankind are considered, justly, as affording abundant encouragement to the Philanthropist and the Christian. "No retrograde movement," says Mrs. S., "can now take place in civilization; the diffusion of Christian virtues and of knowledge ensures the progressive advancement of man in those high moral and intellectual qualities that constitute his true dignity." This is an animating and consoling reflection. It is founded on truth;—the truth of history—the truth of science—the truth of Scripture.

We have given a very meagre account of Mrs. Somerville's work; but we trust that enough has been said to induce our readers to procure it for themselves. A careful perusal of these volumes, accompanied by the use of a good Atlas, will be an excellent kind of entertainment for the young during the ensuing winter evenings.

The Biblical and Theological Quarterlies.

The *Bibliotheca Sacra* for August contains the following articles:—1. Depression of the Dead Sea, and of the Jordan Valley—by Dr. Robinson. 2. Alleged Anachronism in Acts v. 36, in relation to the sedition of Theudas—from