

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE CONDOR.

THE condor, which chiefly inhabits the valley of Ylo, in Peru, is unquestionably the largest of those birds which have the power of flight. It is sometimes, though but rarely, upwards of fifteen feet across the wings when extended. The beak, four inches long, is so strong as to be able to pierce the body of a bullock; and talons so strong as to enable it to carry off a deer or young calf. They seldom frequent the forest, as their flight would be thereby impeded. They descend from an almost incredible height, sometimes 20,000 feet from the top of the mountains. "The peculiarities of structure in the respiratory system of birds have, probably, a relation," says Dr. Roger, "to the capability we see them possess, of bearing with impunity very quick and violent changes of atmospheric pressure. Thus the condor of the Andes is often seen to descend rapidly, from a height of above 20,000 feet, to the edge of the sea, where the air is more than twice the density of that which the bird had been breathing." "We are as yet," he adds, "unable to trace the connexion which probably exists between the structure of the lungs, and this extraordinary power of accommodation to such great and sudden variations of atmospheric pressure."

The general colour of the condor is brownish, the feathers on the back, however, are sometimes perfectly black. The neck is encircled with a white ruff, and the head is a species of comb.

The condor is very destructive, and consequently, various methods are employed with success to capture it. Sometimes a person, clothed in the skin of a newly-killed animal, goes out, and entices the condor to attack him; while his companions, who have secreted themselves, from their hiding-places rush out and seize him. The female make her nest among the highest and most inaccessible rocks; where she lays two white eggs, somewhat bigger than those of a turkey.

HORRORS OF WAR.

"I never shall forget," said Captain B., "my first sight of blood shed in the field of battle, and my first sensation upon taking part in it. I was a raw recruit, and had never thought seriously of the dangers or duties of a fight until I was entirely in one. Our regiment was in Spain, and I joined it just in time to join the ranks, shoulder my musket, and see how fields were won. My friend W., who accompanied me, was by my side, and we eyed one another askance, and in silence. He looked a shade paler than usual, from extreme consciousness of his situation and inexperience. I thought I felt a slight vibration of his shoulder as it touched mine. I like to repeat this, for a braver man than W. never lived, and I knew that I was ashy pale. The older soldiers all calm, settled in aspect, 'fixed,' and cold as their bayonets. I was struck by the absence of hustle around me. There was less noise and confusion of cannon and musketry than I expected to hear. As we advanced, I could discern the enemy in the distance; we were about to charge. I could distinguish faint noises of encouragement from the French ranks, whilst our officers were constantly saying, 'Steady, men—steady—shoulder to shoulder.' As we heard our foes, my heart smote my ribs. I looked at W., muttered, 'Mind, we stand by each other.' He answered, 'Yes!' and we continued to advance. The features of the Frenchmen were now to be distinguished. Suddenly they ceased to advance, and a bright flame ran along the line, succeeded by a volley. I halted a second, as did every man, as from an instinctive sense of danger. In that second my left hand fell flat on his back, but I did not then see any blood. There was a slight disturbance in our line, but the reiterated command 'Steady, my lads, steady,' kept our senses about us. A rattling fire now came from our foes, and when we arrived to within about twenty yards of them the word was given to 'fire.' I had hardly raised my musket to my shoulder, when such a cheer broke forth as I have heard since, but never before. 'Charge!' shouted voices in our rear, and we dashed. The collision was but momentary; before our steel touched theirs they were beaten. Their line seemed to dissolve with a sudden crash, and behind them stood another prepared to receive us. Upon them we fell pellmell; a bayonet pricker my shoulder, and my own pierced a man's heart:

another was aimed at me by a Frenchman, who was felled in the act by the butt end of a musket—it was W.'s, who now, blood-red and shouting, with the rest exclaimed, 'There they go—there they go—hurrah!' We were not allowed to follow. To avoid cavalry we formed a square, and there I had leisure to contemplate the shedding of first blood."

APATHY OF THE ARABS.

Our religion teaches toleration, equality, and pardon of injuries—their exalts that of Mahomet, and considers every one who dissents from it as a mere dog; it prescribes vengeance, and sanctions the abuse of superior power. The few virtues the Arabs can boast of have their origin in ostentation: for as soon as the necessity for any display of false generosity or dignified conduct is passed, they return to their incorrigibly ferocious habits of murder, robbery, and fanaticism. Judge of them by appearance, at times, they may be believed to be kind and compassionate, but on deeper examination it will soon be found that all these signs of goodness & benevolence are merely hypocritical stimulations, adopted from their religion and habits. When a death happens, and you see them strike their heads in despair, and utter agonizing cries of grief—when the women shriek, bruise their bosom with their fists, and tear their flesh with their nails—do not imagine that all this arises from their regret at the loss of the deceased, or their respect for his character: no, it is merely an observance of custom. Signs of mourning must be shown, they say, because a man must not die like a dog, and leave no regret behind. But when once under the earth they think no more of him whatever than if he had never existed. During those latter years there have occurred at Algiers, and in its environs, numerous accidents from pulling down old buildings and in other works, and in many cases five and six Arabs and other natives have been buried together under the fallen ruins; and yet I have never in a single instance seen the Arabs make the slightest efforts to save the victims, even though they were their own parents and children. To complete this picture I add the following incident. In 1839, about twenty Arabs from the environs came into the town to a festival.—On their way back, when opposite to the magazine for forage, one of them fell under a cart heavily laden, the wheels going over both his legs, crushing the bones from the knees to the ankles. The pain the poor creature suffered was excruciating. He implored the compassion of his companions in the most piteous terms, allying them by their holy religion, and all that they held most dear and sacred, that they would place him on some conveyance, and conduct him home.—Instead, however, of doing this, they merely uttered the few words of the Koran, "God is great," and walked away without showing the slightest commiseration.—*The Globe.*

FANATICISM IN THE FOURTH CENTURY.

Persecution on the one side, and fanaticism on the other, were perpetuated through the three centuries, up to the period of the extinction of Christianity in Africa. The wandering preachers of the Donatist faction had no other means of living than the alms as their flock; their influence and consideration, therefore, depended solely on their power of heating the imaginations and working on the fears of the feeble-minded, and thus gradually diffusing over the whole congregation that moral contagion which they began by exciting in women and children. As might be expected, they outdid each other in extravagance, and soon gave way to the most frantic ravings; thousands of peasants, drunk with the effect of these exhortations, forsook their ploughs and fled to the deserts of Getulia. Their bishops assuming the title of captains of the saints, put themselves at their head, and they rushed onwards, carrying death and desolation into the adjacent provinces; they were distinguished by the name of Circumcelliones: Africa was devastated by their ravages. They, in their turn, were delivered over to the most cruel torments whenever they fell into the hands of the imperial officers or the orthodox party, in the hope that the severity of these examples would intimidate their followers. Such measures, however, were perfectly unsuccessful, since the palm of martyrdom was the object of their most ardent desires. Persuaded that the most acceptable offering they could make to the Deity was their

own lives, they frequently stopped the affrighted traveller, and, holding a dagger to his breast, demanded of him to put them to death. Often with arms in their hands they forced their way into the courts of justice, and compelled the judges to send them to torture and to death. Often they put an end to their own existence. Those who thought themselves sufficiently prepared for martyrdom, assembled their numerous congregations at the foot of some rocks or lofty tower; and there, in the midst of prayers and the chanting of litanies, they threw themselves, one after another, from the height, and expired on the ground below.—*Sismondi.*

CIVIL INTELLIGENCE.

LATE AND IMPORTANT FROM ENGLAND.

CANADIAN AFFAIRS.

Nothing of the least interest to the transatlantic world has occurred in the British Parliament since the last packet sailed, with the exception of the debate on Canada. Mr. Roebuck, on Thursday night, brought the state of that important Colony before the House of Commons. In doing this, he took a discursive view of the Government of the late Lord Sydenham, on whose policy he made a bitter attack; proceeded to eulogise that of Sir Charles Bagot, who got out of his difficulties by wisely conceding "Responsible Government," and then treated, in detail, the position of parties in the Colony at the present moment, attributing the heart-burnings and dissensions to the fatal policy which Sir Charles Metcalfe had pursued in dismissing the executive council, and in opening all the wounds which the enlarged and conciliatory policy of his predecessor had healed. Mr. Roebuck does nothing by halves. Earnestness of purpose he brings to every question, copiously impregnated with a waspish malignity that not merely cuts, but leaves gangrene behind. The debate, in short, was a recapitulation of the history of Canada since the mission of Lord Durham, and the new condition of society, arising out of the changes produced thereby—dressed up after the manner of the most approved political warfare. Mr. Roebuck was, of course, the advocate of the extreme French party; but he was left alone in his glory. Mr. Hume, the lukewarm friend of the French Canadians, declined to follow him, and recommended "conciliation to both parties." Indeed, all the speakers who followed Mr. Roebuck, contended for "responsible government," not in the sense understood by the learned member for Bath, by tying the tongue of the Governor General, and rendering him a mere cypher as the representative of the Crown, but by vesting the responsibility in the heads of departments, enjoying the confidence of the Executive, and of a majority of the Legislative Assembly. Incidentally, the marked difference between a colony and the mother country, in their social and political relations, was discussed, as bearing upon the question of responsible government. The ministers who spoke—Lord Stanley and Sir Robert Peel—enunciated very liberal sentiments; the former repudiating all alliance with, all sympathy for, the Orange party in the Colony; and the latter declaring, that if Canada could not be held by the affection of the colonists to the Crown, it was worse than useless to attempt to hold it by force. The speeches of Mr. C. Buller and Lord Russell were also conceived in a similar spirit—both strenuously supporting the government policy; indeed, the strong condemnation passed by Mr. Buller upon the proceedings of the ultra-liberals, may be taken as the expression of the liberal party in England on the subject. The debate cannot fail to do good. All the speakers, with the exception of the mover, expressed themselves warmly in favour of Sir Charles Metcalfe; and it is clear, that if the dissatisfaction of the colony drives him home, no adequate substitute—no one so likely to be generally acceptable—will be found. The declaration of Lord Stanley, that the Crown had not exercised, is determined not to exercise, any patronage in Canada, is creditable to its impartiality. As throwing oil on the troubled waters, Mr. Roebuck's motion, which had no definite aim beyond provoking discussion, will not be without its effects, irrespective of that gentleman's feelings and wishes on the subject.