

Thus, and by lawful means, is England lengthening her cords and strengthening her stakes on the shores of Guinea.

When the natives of Danish Accra heard that they were to change their masters, they received the tidings with the wildest enthusiasm, and, with shouts for Victoria and processions in her honor, welcomed the rule of her Majesty and the new era of their history. The superiority of English rule and civilization in elevating African humanity, may be seen in the advanced condition of the natives in the English territories, as compared with those of territories under other foreign influence.

Jules Braouerce, commander of the corvette Oisc, is now exploring the wholly unknown country through which the Gaboon River runs.

The Swedish discoverer, Anderson, has travelled Ovampo, on the West coast of Africa, south Benguela, in the direction of the Cunene River.

The French missionary, Leo des Avanchers, is travelling through the country which lies to the eastward of this great sea. The German traveller, Albert Roscher, has gone in the same direction, having left Zanzibar with the hope of penetrating far into the interior.

Pedro de Gamitto, Governor of the Portuguese forts Tete and Sena on the Zambeze, is making preparations for new explorations in Central Africa, of which he has already given such interesting descriptions in his book "Muata Cazembe."

Maasaga, the Sardinian missionary, is now exploring the interior of Abyssinia; so also is Baysiere.

The Upper Nile is the object of untiring exploration. It would be strange if, before the end of this century, its whole course were not as well known as is now that of the Thames, the Seine or the Rhine. While Egyptologists and archaeologists like Mariette, Deveria, Pommereuil, de Sebyl, Brugsch, Eckhold and others, are searching out the mysteries of Ancient Egypt far up into Nubia, scientific men have undertaken, singly or in small numbers, to follow the Nile upward, in spite of all the difficulties which for three thousand years have baffled the bravest explorers. Messrs. Frith and Windham are this month starting to go up the White Nile in an iron boat thirty-six feet long, drawing but one foot of water. They will be accompanied or followed by Messrs. Thomassy, Miani and others.

Mr. McCarty, the son of the geographer, has it in contemplation to travel on a new track to Timbuctoo from Algiers, where he was lived these eight years. According to his plan he will pass through Laghouat and Goleah, then make a circuit to the east to get out of the way of a tribe of Arabs who have been bejuggled by a new prophet, and then continue his journey by Ghadames, Ghat and Lake Tsad.

Other travellers, also, such as Capt. Magnan, Baron Kraft, and Yussufben Gallabi, are bent on discovery, starting from Algiers or other northern points. Asia, too, is being explored by many travellers; but as yet we have few details of their discoveries. Kriel has been sent by the Vienna Academy into Asiatic Turkey. Rey is exploring some hitherto neglected portions of Syria and Palestine. The brothers Schlaginweit are still continuing their researches in Central Asia. A Russian scientific expedition is engaged in the exploration of Chorassan, while a detachment of the French troops in Indo-China is escorting a scientific corps through that country. Many other savants have received missions from the Ministry of Public Instructions, or from the Paris Museum. Besides this, the Catholic and protestant missionaries are coming more and more to consider it a part of their duty to send home precise and comprehensive ethnographic and geographic intelligence of the countries through which they travel.

VIII. Biographical Sketches.

No. 1. WASHINGTON IRVING. LL.D.

The name of this genial, gifted and illustrious writer, now belongs to the past, and in his death the literature of the United States has lost one of its brightest ornaments, a name honoured at home and respected abroad. Washington Irving was born at New York, on the third of April, 1783. His father, who was a respectable merchant, originally from Scotland, died while he was quite young, and his education was superintended by his elder brothers. Grisword, in his "Prose writers of America," states that in his youth he was of a meditative and almost melancholy disposition, though at times evincing something of that rich and peculiar humor, for which he became so famous. His first essays in literature were a series of letters in 1802, published in the *Morning Chronicle*, of which his brother, Mr. Peter Irving, was editor. In consequence of symptoms of pulmonary disease, he proceeded in the following year to the Mediterranean. He was landed on the southern coast of Sicily,—whence he proceeded by way of Palermo and Naples to Rome—and through France to England. He returned in 1806, and soon after joined Mr. Paulding in writing *Salmagundi*. Shortly afterwards he published his "Knickerbocker's History of New York," one of

the most genial and humorous of his compositions. He was admitted into partnership with his brothers, who were extensively engaged in foreign trade, and in 1815, he went to reside in Liverpool, to assist in conducting the business. But he had hardly landed in England, when a reverse of fortune swept away the entire business of the firm. He now resorted to literature as a solace and support, and in 1819 and 1820, published the *Sketch Book*—in London and New York,—a work which contains some beautiful sketches, always fresh and pleasing. This was followed by *Bracebridge Hall* in 1822, and several other works. In 1828, having spent several years in Madrid, he published the life of Columbus, and in 1831, the voyages and discoveries of the Companions of Columbus. In 1832, after an absence of seventeen years, he returned to his native country, and shortly after purchased the old mansion of the Van Tassels, on the Hudson, in the vicinity of Sleepy Hollow. Here he passed his summers, and his winters he spent in New York. In 1835, he published his *Tour of the Prairies*, which was followed by *Abbotsford*, *Newstead Abbey*, *Legends of the Conquests of Spain*, *Astoria*, the *Rocky Mountains* and other works. In 1841 he was appointed Minister plenipotentiary to Spain, and resided five years in Madrid—and in the autumn of 1846 returned to New York. He was never married, but had about him the daughters of a brother who were to him as his own children, and who loved him with all the love a father could engage. His last work, the *Life of Washington*, was completed shortly before his death.—The *New York Times* thus speaks of the close of his career. "He was granted the privilege of completing this latest of his works; and closing then, forever, the portfolio out of which so many sweet and kindly and beneficent creations had passed into the world, and with them not one evil thing, one false spirit, one impure; the old man quietly folded his hands in his well-named home of Sunnyside, the goal of a life sunlit by goodness and beauty; and there awaited the summons which has come to him now as gently as we could have asked it should. He died almost in the arms of his niece, without any visible sign of suffering, and after an evening passed in the society of friends whom he loved, and in the indulgence of all those genial and pleasant emotions which he loved especially to cherish in himself, and in all with whom he was brought into contact. With the development of our national literature, greater men than Washington Irving may arise among us; men of deeper thought, of an intellectual originality more grand and imposing; eagles poised on stronger pinions, and circling higher with a bolder flight than he. But the name of the magician who evoked the shapes of legendary life from all the loveliest nooks of the Hudson, and first clothed the new world with a robe of fancy and of feeling, will never die; and we may well rejoice that his spirit will dwell in our literature with an influence as stainless and as wholesome as the remembered image of the man himself will be pure, and peaceable and righteous in the hearts of all who knew him in the flesh."—*Montreal Family Herald*.

No. 2. PROFESSOR GEORGE WILSON, M. D.

We have this day the melancholy duty to record the death of Dr. Geo. Wilson, F.R.S.E., Professor of Technology in the University of Edinburgh, Director of the Industrial Museum of Scotland, and brother of Professor Daniel Wilson, University College, Toronto. Professor George Wilson had naturally a weak constitution, and a feeble frame of body, and he suffered much from sickness during his comparatively brief career. Indeed, his kind and generous disposition often caused him to take more work than he might have done; and the fatigues he endured in connection with the new museum contributed in no small degree to shorten his days. He took a peculiar interest in the subject of his chair, and treated it in a most felicitous manner. He was a most attractive lecturer. He desired to make science popular, and he succeeded admirably. His style was well calculated to attract an audience, as was evidenced by the crowds that attended his appearances in public. The Philosophical Institution benefitted much by his interesting prelections on many occasions. He had a genial spirit, and entered with ardor into the socialities of life. Withal he displayed a truly Christian deportment. Science in his hands was made subservient to the best interests of his fellow-men. The connection between science and religion was never forgotten by him, and he directed the minds of his pupils to a higher knowledge than that on earth. He was ready for every good work, and his writings breathe throughout a spirit of Christian philanthropy. There is in them a grace of diction, a fluency of style, and a force of illustration, which are truly remarkable. At the time of his death, he was engaged in writing the biography of his friend, Professor Edward Forbes, whose unexpected death occurred in a similar way at the commencement of a former session. It is to be hoped that the materials are in such a state that they can be made available. Among his published works are the *Life of the Hon. Henry Cavendish*, forming one of the volumes of