GENERAL MISCELLANY.

Egypt and its Monuments.

A remarkable feature in Egypt is the extraordinary dryness of the atmosphere. The question has sometimes been asked, how it has been possible that the monuments of this ancient nation should have survived the touch of time for so many centuries, and though dilapidated in some degree, should yet present to the eye of the traveller

"A noble wreck in ruinous perfection,"

so widely different from the architectural monuments of the past, to be found in the tropical regions of our own Central America and Yucatan. The burning sands of the almost boundless deserts have abstracted from the atmosphere of Egypt the great physical agent in the decomposition of matter—moisture. Hence but little corrosion of the monuments, but little obliteration of the painting on stone. When injury has been sustained from natural causes, it has been produced by other physical agencies than those of moisture: the sand has sometimes done its work of destruction. Thus, among the ruins of Alexandria, an obelisk is still standing, which, on its north and east faces, retains much of the freshness and sharpness of its original chiselling; while on the other two sides, the sands of the desert, which have been beating against them for several hundred years, have partially effaced the inscriptions. In any other country than Egypt the whole would probably long since have been destroyed. A few years ago the French transported an obelisk from Luxor, and raised it in Paris; and though the material is granite, and though for many centuries it had stood uninjured in its original position; yet it has already been found necessary to cover it with a liquid preparation of caoutchouc, to protect it from the corrosive effects of the atmosphere in Paris.

There are temples in Egypt which have been roofless for two thousand years; their walls are covered with paintings. The colours are still distinctly perceptible, and in many instances retain all their original freshness. It is not strange, then, that the sculptured stone should remain, or that with the polish unimpaired to it received in the schools of the workmen of many hundreds of years ago. Such is at this moment the condition of the temples of Egypt. The history of Egypt is known to extend beyond 3,000 years before the Christian era. The same features which we now behold, were then in existence. At Alexandria, in Nubia, the whole of the country is measured by navigation of time; in [illegible] the figures [illegible] could have [illegible] the [illegible] of the pillars now [illegible] they are now. Indeed it is [illegible] when our ancestors lived in that great world [illegible] Egypt, [illegible] excavated in the rock of the [illegible]