

From Mrs. Sigourney's Pleasant Memories of Pleasant Lands.

LITERATURE IN FRANCE.

LITERARY reputation as well as scientific attainment are highly appreciated in Paris. Intellect, and the labors of intellect, are here passports to the temple of honor, which in most countries must be entered with a key of gold. It is pleasing to see with what enthusiasm Lamartine and Arago are pointed out in their seats, amid the five hundred members of the Chamber of Deputies. The poet De la Vigne, notwithstanding his retiring modesty, is shown exultingly to strangers, and the pen of Guizot has won him more admirers than his political fame. It was gratifying to perceive that our talented countryman, Robert Walsh, Esq., was as highly and truly respected in the capital of France, as in the land of his birth. One of the most imposing audiences, that I remember to have seen while there, was convened in the Palace of the Institute, formerly the Mazarine College, to witness the admission of a new member, the Count Mole, into the Institute of France. The assembled academicians, in their becoming uniform, listened intently to his animated inaugural oration, and to the reply of the President Dupin, while, from their niches in the spacious hall, the marble brows of Massillon, Fenelon, and Bossuet, Sully, Descartes, and others, looked down with imperturbable dignity.

Taste for the fine arts forms an integral part of the character of the French. From the saloon of the noble to the shop of the petty marchand des modes, it is seen in every variety of adornment, from the costly painting or chiseled group of the ancient master, to the simple vase of artificial flowers under its glass shade, or the little fancy-clock, that hastens the movements of the needle. The very street-beggar feels a property and a pride in the decorations of *la belle Paris*. To rifle a plant, or wound a tree, or deface a statue in the public squares or gardens, is held by the rudest boy an indelible disgrace. Would that it were so everywhere!

In the Louvre, amid that astonishing collection of 1500 arranged pictures, and probably as many more for which the walls of its sumptuous gallery have no space, were groups of artists, of both sexes, diligently employed in copying *ad libitum*. The department of statuary, notwithstanding the spoils of Italy have been abstracted and restored, is still very extensive. Our party often found themselves attracted towards a lovely, pensive Polhymnia, and a fine infant Mercury, and imagined among the effigies of the Emperors of Rome some resemblance to their real character; especially in the philosophic features of Marcus Aurelius, the thoughtful brow of Antoninus Pius, and the varied lineaments of Trajan, Severus, and Nerva, Domitian, Nero, and Caracalla; though a youthful Commodus in his gentleness and grace displayed none of those latent evils, which gave the sharpest pang to the death-bed of his father.

Like the Louvre, the Bibliotheque du Roi is fitted up with every accommodation of light, warmth, and silent recess for those who are desirous of profiting by its immense accumulation of 900,000 volumes, and 80,000 manuscripts. The books are in cases, protected by wire grating, and librarians are always in attendance, to reach such as are desired. Tables, with ink-stands, are in readiness for those who desire to make extracts, and no conversation is allowed to disturb such as may be engaged in profound researches. It was pleasant to see so many of my own sex seated silently at these tables, and absorbed in the pursuit of knowledge.

The magnificence of the churches in Paris, and the multitude of their paintings, statues, and bas-relievs, are noticed by all. At Notre Dame and St Roch, we saw the pompous service of the Romish ritual, and the appearance of deep devotion among the worshippers, especially those whose garb announced their poverty. But without the doors, and in all the streets, went on the accustomed movements of toil and of pleasure, the building of houses, the digging of trenches, the traffic of market-people and tradesmen, the review of troops, the rush of throngs intent on amusement, as if the Almighty had not from the beginning set apart for himself a day of sacred rest. To one inured to the

quietness and hallowed observance of a New-England Sabbath, this desecration is peculiarly painful.

The pulpit eloquence of France is with much more gesticulation than in England, or our own country. Indeed, the vehement style marks most of the public speaking that we heard there; at the Bourse, where the merchants negotiate sales of stock, and transact other business, at the very top of their voices; in the tribunals, where the advocates plead with their whole bodily force; and in the Chamber of Deputies, where the exciting question of war with England was one morning discussed with such violence, as to excite apprehensions that it might end in actual combat.

Splendid Tribute to the Talents of Chatham.

TALENTS, whenever they have had a suitable theatre, have never failed to emerge from obscurity, and assume their proper rank in the estimation of the world. The jealous pride of power may attempt to repress and crush them; the base and malignant rancor of impotent spleen and envy may strive to embarrass and retard their flight: but these efforts, so far from achieving their ignoble purpose, so far from producing a discernable obliquity in the ascent of genuine and vigorous talents, will serve only to increase their momentum, and mark their transit with an additional stream of glory.

When the great earl of Chatham first made his appearance in the house of commons, and began to astonish and transport the British parliament and the British nation, by the boldness, the force and range of his thoughts, and the celestial fire, and pathos of his eloquence, it is well known that the minister, Walpole, and his brother Horace, from motives very easily understood, exerted all their wit, all their oratory, all their acquirements of every description, sustained and enforced by the unfeeling "insolence of office," to heave a mountain on his gigantic genius, and hide it from the world.—Poor and powerless attempt!—The tables were turned. He rose upon them, in the might and irresistible energy of his genius, and in spite of all their convulsions, frantic agonies, and spasms, he strangled them and their whole faction, with as much ease as Hercules did the serpent Python.

Who can turn over the debates of the day, and read the account of this conflict between youthful ardor and hoary-headed cunning and power, without kindling in the cause of the tyro, and shouting at his victory? What they should have attempted to pass off the grand, yet solid and judicious operations of a mind like his, as mere theatrical start and emotion; the giddy, hair-brained eccentricities of a romantic boy! That they should have had the presumption to suppose themselves capable of chaining down to the floor of the parliament, a genius so ethereal, towering and sublime, seems unaccountable! Why did they not, in the next breath, by way of crowning the climax of vanity, bid the magnificent fire-ball to descend from its exalted and appropriate region, and perform its splendid tour along the surface of the earth?

Talents, which are before the public have nothing to dread, either from the jealous pride of power, or from the transient misrepresentations of party, spleen, or envy. In spite of opposition from any cause, their buoyant spirit will lift them to their proper grade.

The man who comes fairly before the world, and who possesses the great and vigorous stamina which entitle him to a niche in the temple of glory, has no reason to dread the ultimate result; however slow his progress may be, he will, in the end, most indubitably receive that distinction. While the rest, "the swallows of science," the butterflies of genius, may flutter for their spring; but they will soon pass away, and be remembered no more. No enterprising man, therefore, and least of all, the truly great man, has reason to droop or repine at any efforts which he may suppose to be made with the view to depress him. Let, then, the tempest of envy or of malice howl around him. His genius will consecrate him; and any attempt to extinguish that, will be as unavailing, as would a human effort to quench the stars.—Wirt.