

For the Pearl.

THE PAST.

The Past—the Past—the mighty Past!—
Its power, and pomp, and pride
Are down to dark oblivion cast—
To nameless things allied.
By nought of earthly might controlled,
Stern Ruin's Lord hath o'er them rolled
His deep o'erwhelming tide,
And down to rayless darkness hurled
The glory of the olden world!

Tyre, Carthage, Babylon, and Rome,
Of yore so much renowned,
Have perished in the general doom—
Their place alone is found!
Their kings—their mighty men of war,
Who filled the world with fear and awe,
Have vanished from the ground.
The hero's form—the sculptor's bust
Alike have mingled with the dust.

Oh! where is now the living tide
Of burning hearts that bore
The victor wreath, the crown of pride,
The meed of praise of yore?
Gone down where all of earth have met,
Their sun in Time's long midnight set,
Their day of glory o'er!
Where once unnumbered myriads trod
No footstep now imprints the sod!

The dust, the very dust we tread—
The cold and silent clay—
Is formed of generations dead
And fallen to decay.
And we, the living on life's stage
Shall all before another age
Become as low as they!
All—all must perish—and at last
All Time will form one mighty Past!

Queen's County, 1839.

J. MCP.

THE HUMMING-BIRD.

The brilliant and lively race of humming-birds, so remarkable at once for their beautiful colours and diminutive size, are the peculiar natives of the American continent, and adjoining islands; and, with few exceptions, are principally confined to the hotter regions. Their vivacity, swiftness, and singular appearance, unite in rendering them the admiration of mankind; while their colours are so radiant, that it is not by comparing them with the analogous hues of other birds that we are enabled to explain, with propriety, their peculiar splendour, but by the more exalted brilliancy of polished metals and precious stones.

It is not, however, to be imagined that all the species of humming-birds are thus decorated; some being obscure in their colours, and, instead of the prevailing splendour of the major part of the genus, exhibiting only a faint appearance of a golden green tinge, diffused over the brown or purplish colour of the back and wings. The genus is of great extent, and, in order that the species may with greater readiness, be investigated, it has been found necessary to divide them into two sections, viz: the curved-billed, and the straight-billed. The exact limits of the two divisions are, however, difficult to determine.

The mode of life in the humming-birds appear to be uniform. They live by absorbing the sweet juices of flowers, which they extract with their tubular tongue; and though small insects are said to have been sometimes observed in their stomachs, yet this seems rather accidental than regular or natural.

A magnificent work has lately appeared on the genus, by Messrs. Vieillot and Audubert, in which a laudable attempt has been made to exhibit the splendour of the natural colours, by means of powder or shell gold, impressed on the plates.

We quote Buffon from an English translation.

"Of all animated beings, the fly-bird (*ciseau mouche*, angl. humming-bird) is the most elegant in its form, and the most brilliant in its colours. The precious stones and metals polished by our art, cannot be compared to this jewel of nature. Her miniature productions are ever the most wonderful; she has placed it in the order of birds, at the bottom of the scale of magnitude; but all the talents which are only shared among the others, swiftness, rapidity, sprightliness, grace, and rich decoration, she has bestowed profusely upon this little favourite. The emerald, the ruby, the topaz, sparkle in its plumage, which is never soiled by the dust of the ground. It inhabits the air; it flutters from flower to flower; it breathes their freshness; it feeds on their nectar, and resides in climates where they blow in perpetual succession. It is in the hottest part of the new world that all the species of the fly-birds are found. They are numerous, and seem confined between the two tropics; for those which pe-

netrate, in summer, within the temperate zones, make but a short stay.

The smaller species do not exceed the bulk of the great gad-fly, or the thickness of the drone. Their bill is a fine needle, and the tongue a delicate thread: their little black eyes resemble two brilliant points: the feathers of their wings are so thin as to look transparent: hardly can the feet be perceived, so short are they, and so slender; and these are little used, for they rest only during the night. Their flight is buzzing, continued and rapid. Maregrave compares the noise of their wings to the whirr of a spinning-wheel; so rapid is the quiver of their pinions, that when the bird halts in the air, it seems at once deprived of motion and life. Thus it rests a few seconds beside a flower, and again shoots to another, like a gleam. It visits them all, thrusting its little tongue into their bosom, and caressing them with its wings; it never settles, but it never quite abandons them."

Dr. S. has very properly cautioned his readers that they are not to expect an equal degree of brilliancy in all the humming-birds, and that some are even of dusky colours. Nor are they all so very minute in size. The topaz-throated humming-bird, the most splendid of the tribe in plumage, is at least equal to the wren in the size of its body; and if measured from the bill to the extent of the longest tail feathers, is not less than eight or ten inches long.—*Review of Dr. Shaw's General Zoology.*

From Cooper's Naval History of U. States.

PROBABLE EFFECTS OF STEAM IN FUTURE WARS.

An opinion is becoming prevalent, that the use of steam will supersede the old mode of conducting naval warfare. Like most novel and bold propositions, this new doctrine has obtained advocates, who have yielded their convictions to the influence of their imaginations, rather than to the influence of reflection. That the use of steam will materially modify naval warfare, is probably true; but it cannot change its general character. No vessel can be built of sufficient force and size to transport a sufficiency of fuel, provisions, munitions of war, and guns, to contend with even a heavy frigate, allowing the last to bring her broadside to bear. It may be questioned if the heaviest steam-vessel of war that exists could engage a modern two-decked ship even in a calm, since the latter, in addition to possessing much greater powers of endurance, could probably bring the most guns to bear in possible positions. Shot-proof batteries might indeed be built, that, propelled by steam, would be exceedingly formidable for harbour defence, but it is illusory to suppose that vessels of that description can ever be made to cruise. Even in estimating the power of steam vessels in calms, as opposed to single ships of no great force, there is much exaggeration, as historical facts will amply prove. The wars of this country afford several instances of frigates carrying eighteen pounders lying exposed to the cannonade of fifteen or twenty gun-boats for two or three hours, and yet in no instance has any such vessel been either captured or destroyed. It is a heavy sea-steamer that can bring six guns to bear at a time, and yet frigates have resisted twenty guns, advantageously placed, for hours. It may be said that steamers would dare to approach nearer than gun-boats, and that, by obtaining more favourable positions, they will be so much the more formidable. There is but one position in which a ship can be assailed without the means of resistance, and that is directly ahead, and from a situation near by. Large ships can hardly be said to be defenceless even under these circumstances; as the slightest variation in their position would always admit of their bringing three or four heavy guns to bear. The expedients of seamen offer a variety of means of changing the direction of a ship's head in calms, even did not the sea itself perform that office for them. Nothing, for instance, would be easier than to rig, temporarily, wheels, to be propelled by hand out of the stern or bow ports, or even on the quarter, that would bring a large ship's forward or after guns to bear, in a way to beat off or destroy a steamer.

There are certain great principles that are unchangeable, and which must prevail under all circumstances. Of this class is the well-established fact, that a ship which possesses the efficiency which is contained in the double power to annoy and to endure, must, in all ordinary circumstances, prevail over a ship that possesses but one of these advantages, and that too in a smaller degree. Steam may be, and most probably will be, made a powerful auxiliary of the present mode of naval warfare, but is by no means likely to supplant it. Fleets may be accompanied by steamers, but their warfare will be conducted by the present classes of heavy ships, since it is not possible to give sufficient powers of annoyance or endurance to vessels propelled by steam, to enable them to lie under the batteries of the latter. Even as active cruisers, the efficiency of steam-vessels is probably overrated, on account of the consumption of fuel, though it remains to be proved by experience whether their employment may not induce a change in the armaments of light vessels of war. The history of the war of 1812 shows that ships have often cruised months without having fallen in with convoys, and it is certain

that no steamer, in the present state of science, can remain at sea thirty days, with efficiency as a steamer.

In a word, while the introduction of steam into naval warfare will greatly modify maritime operations, is by no means likely to effect the revolution that is supposed. In those portions of the art of seamanship that it will influence, steam will meet steam, and, in the end, it will be found that the force of fleets will be required in settling the interest of states, as to-day.

EPITAPH ON THE LATE MR. KEAN.

Pause, thoughtful stranger: pass not heedless by
When Kean awaits the tribute of a sigh.
There, sunk in death, those powers the world admired,
By nature given, not by art acquired.
In various parts his matchless talents shone,
The one he failed in was, alas! his own.

BEAUTIES OF SAM SLICK.

DIGBY.—Digby is a charming little town. It is the Brighton of Nova Scotia, the resort of the valotudinarians of New Brunswick, who take refuge here from the unrelenting fogs, hopeless sterility, and calcareous waters of St. John. About as pretty a location, this for business, said the Clockmaker, as I know on in this country. Digby is the only safe harbour from Blomedown to Briar Island. Then there is that everlastin' long river runnin' away from the wharves here almost across to Minas Basin, bordered with dikes and interval, and backed up by good upland. A nice, dry, pleasant place for a town, with good water, good air, and the best herrin' fishery in America.

THE FINE ARTS.—Poetry is the music of words, music is the poetry of sounds, and paintin' is the poetry of colours;—what a sweet, interestin' family they be, ain't they? We must locate, domesticate, acclimate, and fraternate them among us.

INFLUENCE OF WOMEN.—Whoever has the women is sure of the men, you may depend, squire; openly or secretly, directly or indirectly, they do contrive, somehow or another, to have their own way in the eend, and tho' the men have the reins, the women tell 'em which way to drive. Now if ever you go for to canvas for votes, always canvas the wives, and you are sure of the husbands.

FASHIONABLE LIFE.—There was mirrors and vases, and lamps, and pictures, and crinkum crankums, and notions of all sorts and sizes in it. It looked like a bazar almost, it was filled with such an everlastin' sight of curiosities.

The room was considerable dark too, for the blinds was shot, and I was skear'd to move for fear o' doin' mischief. Presently in comes Ahab slowly sailin' in, like a boat droppin' down stream in a calm, with a pair o' purple slippers on, and a figured silk dressin' gound, and carryin' a most beautiful-bound book in his hand.

BOOKS OF TRAVELS.—All they got to do is, to up Hedson like a shot, into the lakes full split, off to Mississippi and down to New Orleans full chisel, back to New York and up Killock and home in a liner, and write a book. They have a whole stock of notes. Spittin',—gougin',—lynchin',—burnin' alive,—steamin' boats blowed up,—snags,—slavery,—stealin'—Texas,—state prisons,—men talk slow,—women talk loud,—both walk fast,—chat in steam boats and stage coaches,—anecdotes,—and so on. Then out comes a book.

THE TOOTH BUSINESS.—The tooth business, said I; what is that? do you mean to say you are a dentist? No, said he, laughing; the tooth business is pickin' up experience. Whenever a feller is considerable cute with us, we say he has cut his eye teeth, he's tolerable sharp; and the study of this I call the tooth business.

ANNAPOLIS.—I'll gist ax to-morrow all about her, for folks have pretty cute cars in Annapolis, there ain't a smack of a kiss that ain't heard all over town in two twos, and sometimes they think they heer 'em even afore they happen. Its most a grand place for news, like all other small places I ever seed.

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