

THE PEARL.

HALIFAX, FRIDAY EVENING, AUGUST 17, 1838.

at Barcelona, she pledged her flock, in order to pay the expenses of two religious sisters and five brethren, whom she sent to attend on the sick in the hospitals. She was desirous also of sending the same sort of assistance to the Greeks during their late struggle, but the government prohibited the departure of her little expedition.

I am sorry to add, that advantage is but too often taken of the enthusiasm and credulity of *La Mere*, and she has frequently been drawn into the snares of the artful, and become responsible for sums of money. Such a circumstance had just occurred when I saw her, and she was obliged to sell some of her "*pauvres bêtes*," as she called them, to answer a heavy demand. As she spoke, the remainder arrived from browsing on the hill, and a little ragged shepherdess conducted them to their fold behind the house: we saw them before we came away, and they evinced much joy at the sight of their mistress. They also licked our hands, and seemed so perfectly tame, that she had evidently spent much time among them, teaching them gentleness.

Such is the history of this wonderful woman, who is still to be seen every day descending and reascending the hill of Montmartre, on her way to and from the military hospitals. A little basket hangs on her arm, and she is escorted by her two dogs. The soldiers bless her as she passes their *casernes*. "*Bon jour, ma mere!*" salutes her on all sides as she goes along; and many of the poorer class feel a superstitious reverence even for her name.

THE LONDON AND BIRMINGHAM RAILWAY.—The London and Birmingham Railway is, unquestionably, the greatest public work ever executed, either in ancient or modern times. If we estimate its importance by the labour alone which has been expended on it, perhaps the Great Chinese Wall might compete with it, but when we consider the immense outlay of capital which it has required,—the great and varied talents which have been in a constant state of requisition during the whole of its progress,—together with the unprecedented engineering difficulties, which we are happy to say are now overcome,—the gigantic work of the Chinese sinks totally into the shade.

It may be amusing to some readers, who are unacquainted with the magnitude of such an undertaking as the London and Birmingham Railway, if we give one or two illustrations of the above assertion. The great Pyramid of Egypt, that stupendous monument which seems likely to exist to the end of all time, will afford a comparison.

After making the necessary allowances for the foundations, galleries, etc., and reducing the whole to one uniform denomination, it will be found that the labour expended on the great Pyramid was equivalent to lifting fifteen thousand seven hundred and thirty-three millions cubic feet of stone one foot high. This labour was performed, according to Diodorus Siculus, by three hundred thousand, and by Herodotus by one hundred thousand men, and it required for its execution twenty years.

If we reduce in the same manner the labour expended in constructing the London and Birmingham Railway to one common denomination, the result is twenty-five thousand million cubic feet of material (reduced to the same weight as that used in constructing the Pyramid) lifted one foot high, or nine thousand two hundred and sixty-seven million cubic feet more than was lifted one foot high in the construction of the Pyramid; yet this immense undertaking has been performed by about twenty thousand men in less than five years.

From the above calculation has been omitted all the tunnelling, culverts, drains, ballasting, and fencing, and all the heavy work of the various stations, and also the labour expended on engines, carriages, wagons, etc.; these are set off against the labour of drawing the materials of the Pyramid from the quarries to the spot where they were to be used—a much larger allowance than is necessary.

As another means of comparison, let us take the cost of the Railway and turn it into pence, and allowing each penny to be one inch and thirty-four hundredths wide, it will be found that these pence laid together so that they all touch, would more than form a continuous band round the earth at the equator.

As a third mode of viewing the magnitude of this work, let us take the circumference of the earth in round numbers at one hundred and thirty million feet. Then, as there are about four hundred million cubic feet of earth to be moved in the Railway, we see that this quantity of material alone, without looking to any thing else, would, if spread in a band one foot high and one foot broad, more than three times encompass the earth at the equator.

It will be evident that such a work as this could only have been undertaken in a country abounding with capital, and possessing engineering talent of the highest order. The steps by which the science of Railways has arrived at its present position were slow, yet progressive. Railways of wood and stone were in use, as well as the flat iron or tramrail, in the middle of the seventeenth century, particularly among the collieries of the north, and were gradually improved from time to time; they still, however retained a character totally distinct from those structures which will soon form the means of transport through all the principal districts of the kingdom.

REVIEW OF NOVELS.—Strange as to some of our readers it may appear, "*Pickwick*" was criticised in the *Eclectic Review* (a religious work remarkable for its strict tone of morality,) some time since, and the number of this periodical for July contains a well-written and able sketch of MR. BULWER'S recent novels, "*Maltravers*," and "*Alice, or the Mysteries*," with sound and reasonable comments on those productions. This we take to be a somewhat novel feature in a religious periodical; but we heartily commend the manly wisdom displayed in introducing such articles into such a work as the *Eclectic*. Who has not read "*Pickwick*?" And how many of the religious world have read or will read both "*Alice*" and "*Maltravers*!" But suppose such reading were shut out from our libraries and banished from the fire-side, could they be excluded from the chamber and the solitary walk, and sealed up wherever the members of our families may roam or rest? Or, could we give complete effect to our interdict against the perusal of all such books by every individual connected with us, by how many thousands of those with whom we and our children, and all we love and care for, must daily associate, would they be still perused and pondered over with enthusiasm and delight! What influence would they still exert over the minds of those by whom, to a great extent, the taste and sentiments even of our own households will be moulded or modified! What power, mysterious indeed and unseen, but mighty, would they still possess, not over such as read them with avidity, but with those also who never opened a page, or scarcely knew of their existence! We are insensibly but powerfully operated upon by all with whom we come in contact: their tastes, sentiments and opinions, affect our own; and, whilst the character is forming, of what untold importance is it that this power should be employed for good! On the narrowest grounds, therefore, and with a view merely to the advantage of ourselves and ours, we should seek to elevate the moral sentiments and habits of the mind, to enable thought to purify the sources of emotion, to chasten and subjugate the imagination, to adorn and dignify the virtue of the entire community. And if the maxim "that he who makes the songs has more power in moulding the character of a people than he who makes their laws" be true, can any more effective means be found for accomplishing these benign ends, than by bringing our most popular authors to the bar of christian criticism, and by seeking to exert the authority of christian principles on the minds of these authors themselves? We are not now discussing the question how far the reading of works of fiction should be indulged in, or by whom nor whether the reading of them should be tolerated at all. We simply deal with the fact that they are, and will be, despite of all our efforts to the contrary, extensively read; and if this be so, then does it appear to us to be the imperative duty of the guides and guardians of our literature, as far as in them lies, to improve and elevate the order of such productions; and obtain a guiding and controlling power, not over readers only, but over the writers too. Let us give the mead of our approval, so far as we faithfully can, even to those who professedly write only for the amusement of the people, where they combine with the fascinations of romance the lessons of a lofty morality, and a daring faith in the providence of a supremely wise and righteous Being,—where they display the beauty of pure and tender sentiment, and the nobleness of magnanimity and self-denial, and expose the debasement of vice in all its forms, its miserable folly, its hopeless shifts, its final and utter failure. Where errors in morality, or ignorance or perversion of christian truth, appear, let these evils be shown and reproved, not with bitter, unchristian severity, and though in charity and with courtesy, yet without compromise. If vice be tolerated or defended, if the strain and tendency of any such productions be to inflame the passions, or to arouse our sympathy in behalf of the victims of any lust, let rebuke be administered with the calm dignity of a noble mind, not the malice of a personal and petty foe. The article in the *Eclectic*, which has drawn from us these remarks, will, we are sure, benefit every one who, by chance or design meets with MR. BULWER'S works; and should it catch the eye of the gifted author himself, we think it will induce him again to revolve the points on which the reviewer is anxious to set him right, and may impart to him new zest and power in his professed endeavours to render the delights of the imagination subservient to the improvement of the heart.

Of the popularity of novels and their extensive circulation, we find the following declaration in Tait's Magazine for June:—
"Apologies for novel-reading are no longer offered or sought. All the world reads the new novels, and a great portion of it with insatiable, devouring appetite. It, indeed, evinces no slight degree of self-control to close the fascinating, drab-coloured 12mo, at the proper hour at night, and not open it again till after breakfast and family prayers are over next morning. Those who eschew the theatre and the opera, the race-course and the hounds in full cry, are but the more likely to yield to the blandishments, the soft seduction, of the novel. Romances, at least since the days of Gray, are nowhere more diligently perused, though sometimes

under the rose, than in the seats of learning. An English parsonage is the very place to meet with and enjoy a novel; nor do Dissenters altogether escape the prevailing epidemic. Novels have been heard of among the Baptists; they are making way among the Quakers. Mr. Wilberforce was, in his day, a considerable novel reader. Robert Hall read novels; and they constituted, to the very worst of them, the daily bread of Crabbe. There went to be shame, doubt, or an awkward bashfulness among the grave and the pious, suspected of this mode of amusement; and among the learned and philosophic, ineffable scorn of a frivolous and enervating pursuit. But strong is frail human nature, and will prevail; so, while "man is dear to man," and while human beings hope and fear, and plan and scheme, and build castles in the air, the whole race, each after his or her kind, will own the enchantment of these *tableaux vivans*, of many-coloured life. The power of the drama will fail before that of the novel; nor is the reason of this difficult or obscure."

A COMPREHENSIVE OUTLINE OF THE GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF NOVA SCOTIA, FROM THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA TO THE REIGN OF QUEEN VICTORIA. FOR SCHOOLS AND PRIVATE INSTRUCTION, BY JOHN CROSSKILL. A work like the present one has long been a desideratum in our provincial literature, both for teachers and for the learner. Of the design and plan of the publication, the industrious author in his preface observes:—

"That the youth of Nova Scotia might no longer be suffered to complete their scholastic days in total ignorance of the History of their native land; that persons of every age, capacity, and rank, might be supplied with an historical narrative sufficiently interesting to repay the attention of a leisure hour—that all who possess a copy of Haliburton's History might have within their reach a manual for ready reference to correct the numerous discrepancies in that otherwise valuable work; that those Schoolmasters who have adopted the History of Nova-Scotia as part of their system of instruction, might have assistance in their efforts—and that others might be induced to extend this laudable but too much neglected practice:—such were the motives which impelled the author to his task—such the prospect which urged him to its completion. No capricious alterations have been made in the language of the authors whose works it was found necessary to consult; a list of which is supplied on the last page, for the convenience of those who are desirous of extending their knowledge of Nova Scotia. While it was necessary to condense the narrative into a small compass, care has been taken to notice every interesting fact, and to continue the history to the present year. Some apology, is necessary for the Map, which does not include the adjacent Provinces, as proposed. The omission is made from causes which the author could not control. Immediately after the appearance of the advertisement, he was politely presented with a beautiful and correct draft, extending to Lake Erie, west—Philadelphia, south—Labrador, north—and Newfoundland, east. This was forthwith put into the hands of the engraver, but the difficulties and delay attending the execution of it, induced him to abandon the object. The Map subjoined, however, contains the new Counties, and is otherwise sufficiently correct for all ordinary purposes."

Appended to the work are some recommendatory notices by the principal teachers in Halifax, and which are highly flattering to the taste and ability of the compiler. As far as our own examination has extended we highly approve of the plan of the work for tuition, and we deem it a tribute to merit, and a duty to the public, to notice and recommend the "**COMPREHENSIVE OUTLINE**," as superior to any thing of the kind we have yet seen and at a very moderate expense. It is sold by all the Booksellers in town, price one shilling and sixpence.

EMBARKATION OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, FOR QUEBEC.—It being known that His Excellency Sir Colin Campbell would embark on board the *Medea*, steamer, on Saturday morning, in order to proceed to Quebec, a great number of people assembled to witness his departure. At ten o'clock, a guard of honor of the Welsh Fusiliers, with the brass band of the Regiment, marched down and took their station on the Queen's wharf. His Excellency was attended to the wharf by his aides; by Col. Snodgrass, the administrator of the Government during his Excellency's absence; by a number of the Members of Her Majesty's Council, and several military gentlemen; and after receiving their adieus, stepped into the barge under a salute from George's Island, the band playing, and loud cheering from the crowds assembled on the Queen's and Market wharf. A guard of marines received him on board the steamer, which lay at a short distance from the wharf, and was immediately under weigh, displaying His Excellency's flag at the main topmast head. Miss Campbell, and two of His Excellency's aides, Lieut. Arthur Campbell, and Col. Starr, accompanied him to Quebec. J. R. Glover, Esq. and lady, and Ensign Bazalgette, also went passengers. The *Medea* will call at Charlotte-Town, P. E. I. for Sir Charles Fitzroy, the Lieut. Governor, who also proceeds to Quebec.—*Times*.