

The Mexicans consisted, as we have said, of a small educated class (not however, apparently selected from any particular tribe,) and a large body of ignorant and demi-savage people, who were under the former, and submitted themselves to be directed by their superior information. This was the kind of civilization which existed in most of the nations of antiquity, no means being then known for the general diffusion of knowledge. It is, however, the most insecure and precarious state in the progress of nations, because, unless with a very strong and well-organised military force, the uninformed mass are always liable to be worked on by some passion or prejudice, and may thus at any time rise and sweep into destruction the whole labours of the better informed and ruling body. Knowledge is very apt to retrograde in such a state, and has indeed done it in various instances; and it is from such a cause that we must trace the destruction of that power and skill which erected the works of which we have been speaking. There is no occasion for supposing that any nation ever existed in North America different from those found there. It appears only that civilization had at one time gained an ascendancy, which, surrounded and mixed as it was with the hostile power of barbarism and ignorance, it was not able to maintain. The connection of this comparative state of improvement with that of the Mexicans, who seem to have been driven from the northern to the southern parts of the same country, may be elucidated by future investigation.

MY EARLY DAYS.

WRITTEN UNDER A PICTURE TAKEN IN CHILDHOOD.

My early days, my early days,
Ye morning stars that linger yet;
And beam as dear departing rays,
When every other star has set:

Spray of the ocean of my life,
Blossom of fruit all faded now;
Ye golden sands in old Time's glass,
Ye green leaves on a wither'd bough—

Oh! where are ye, and where am I?
Where is that happy sinless child
That chas'd the gaudy butterfly,
As gay as that, and far more wild.

Am I that bold and fearless boy
That stemm'd the flood and climb'd the height?
All health and truth, all life and joy,
First in the frolic or the fight.

Ah! no—where once the sunlight shone,
I wander now amid the shade;
The hopes that led my boyhood on,
Are wither'd all, or all betray'd.

I cannot bear to gaze again
On visions that could fade so fast;
Nor, 'mid a present scene of pain,
Cast back a thought on blisses past.

SCRAPS FROM ANTIQUITY.

EGYPTIAN LAWS.

The Egyptians, a wise people, to whom Europe is indebted for the best of her institutions, had some singular laws, peculiar, indeed, to themselves, but founded on the deepest reflection and happiest views of state policy. Every man of the Egyptians was ordered to give in to the magistrate to

whose authority he was subjected, an account of the ways and means whereby he derived a livelihood, and maintained himself alone, or himself and family together; and the punishment of death was considered due to him who either falsified his return, or refused it. Solon, who travelled into Egypt for the sake of deriving wisdom from conversing with her wise men, transferred this law to Athens. It would appear that, by the laws of Egypt, ignominious bodily labour was substituted in many cases for the severer punishment of death. One of their kings, by name Sabaco, recommended this substitution, seeing that, by the labour of the condemned culprit, advantage was derived to the state; whereas death not only was too severe, in most cases, for the frail peccabilities of mankind, but was utterly barren of utility, as well to the public as to the individual—a reflection highly honourable to the monarch of Thebes, and worthy of being acted upon by all the legislators of Europe. Herodotus says, that condemned persons in Egypt seldom if ever suffered death, but were allowed to live, subjected, however, to severe bodily labour in the public works; and that the mounds or artificial eminences, wherever, for the sake of protection from the inundations of the Nile, their cities were built, were the production of the labour of the criminals thus beneficially employed. The laws of another king, by name Bocchoris, regarding debts and money transactions, are likewise founded on great good sense. Persons borrowing money, or sued as having borrowed money from others, without the accusing party having bond, bill, or recognition to prove the debt, are acquitted from it, on their giving their oaths they owe nothing. [This enactment, we believe, has been transferred to every country.] Of those, however, who were truly debtors, the creditor had it in his power to attach and distrain the goods only; his person was considered as sacred to the state, pledged, in common with his countrymen, for its defence and protection; therefore was secure, or ought to be secure, from the violations of an irritated creditor.

MY FATHER'S NAME.

ON HEARING IT UNEXPECTEDLY AND HONOURABLY MENTIONED AT A PUBLIC MEETING.

My father's name—my father's name—how hallowed and how dear!

That sound—it fell like melody upon my list'ning ear!
What tho' a stranger spoke his praise—so exquisite it came,
At once I lov'd him as a friend—it was my father's name!

There was a fullness of the heart, a glist'ning of the eye,
A sudden flushing of the cheek—I cannot tell ye why!
I probed not then the mighty throb that shook my trembling frame—
I only knew, I only felt—it was my father's name!

And cloudless will I keep that name, while God my life shall spare;
It never yet confessed a blot—nor stain shall enter there;
In woe or weal, unsullied still by shadow or by shame,
Proudly my heart shall beat to tell—"It is my father's name."

And when at length they lay me down within the peaceful grave,
And He, the mighty Lord of all, shall claim the breath He gave,
Let but one line above my tomb, one sculptured line proclaim—
"He found it spotless, and unstained is still his father's name."